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"OI KNOW THAT MISTHER DAN HAS BEEN POISONED, SO HE HAS, AND THAT YOU
PUT THE STOOF IN THE WATHER!"

OR, Double-Curve Dan's Double Play.

BY GEO. C. JENKS,
AUTHOR OF "DOUBLE-CURVE DAN, THE PITCHER
DETECTIVE," "FLUTE, THE SINGER DE-
TECTIVE," "GIT THAR OWNEY,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I. ONE STRIKE.

A HOT evening in July.
The sun had been baking the roofs and pave-
ments of Albany all day, and even now, with
the dark, diamond-studded vault of heaven over-
head, and deep shadow everywhere except where
the gas and electric lights relieved the gloom, it
seemed almost as if water would sizzle if thrown
on the flagstones.

The tall walls of the Capitol at the head of State street, faintly discernible in the starlight, might have been at a white heat, as it seemed to the sweltering people, who, sitting on doorsteps and sidewalk, were gasping for breath.

Hardly an intimation of a breeze was stirring, and the waters of the Hudson River, of which a glimpse could be obtained now and then in the lamplight between the houses were almost as smooth as glass.

On the sidewalk in front of the American House on State street, sat two men. An electric light high up on a pole before the hotel illuminated the house, and would have brought the two men into strong relief, but for the poplars that intercepted the rays and lent a convenient shadow.

We say convenient, for it was evident that the men did not desire to be noticed, and that their conversation was of a strictly private nature.

Each was sitting in a rush-bottomed hotel chair, tilted back against the trunk of a tree, and their heads were as close together as it was possible to get them.

"Are you sure that he will stay all night?" asked one, a slim, dark young man, negligently attired in a gayly-striped fancy flannel shirt, a broad Panama hat, and a thin calico coat. He was evidently determined to be as cool as possible, regardless of appearances, though his every word and movement bespoke one accustomed to good society.

"Am I sure? Wal, now, you kin bet yer boots thet when Sam Walker sez a thing, it goes! I didn't git my name o' Slicker fer nothin'!"

"Very elegant," responded the other, carelessly, as he knocked the ashes from his cigar. "But what about the boy? Whereabouts is his room?"

"See thet winder at ther corner of ther house, up in the third story?"

"Yes."

"Thet's whar he is. He hez ther black sachel, with ther diamonds up thar with him, an' he never lets it out of his sight. When he goes to bed he puts it under his vest an' makes a pillow of it."

"You are a smart rascal, Mr.—Mr.—Slicker," remarked his companion, turning his head to look into the other's face. "You know all about the young man's habits, it seems."

"It wuz my business ter find out," replied Slicker, shortly. "Now, I'll drop inter ther room some time afore mornin', an' git ther shiners. I'll turn 'em over ter you out of ther window of my room, right next to his'n, an' you git them ter your house ez quick an' ez slick ez yer kin. See? No one will suspect you, an' when ther trouble hez sort o' blown over, why, we kin divide ther swag. Thar ain't much risk 'bout unset stones anyhow."

The young man's face flushed as he listened to the plan of his companion. He evidently did not like the alliance, and it was hard to understand how he had come to be a partner in crime with the individual by his side.

Sam Walker, or "Slicker," was a short, stout, bullet-headed fellow of perhaps thirty years of age. Dressed in a rather flashy suit, of Bowery cut, his short sack coat and vest were both unbuttoned, revealing a shirt of black and white cross-bar pattern, unconcealed by anything in the way of necktie or collar. On his head he wore a large, broad-brimmed white felt hat, such as is seldom seen east of Kansas City, and looked at from the shoulders up, Slicker might have been taken for a genuine cowboy, especially as he allowed his hair to grow as long as it would, and kept it brushed behind his ears. The fact was that Slicker had spent a year or two of his life on the plains, and in dress and speech there were yet to be discerned traces of his experience in the West.

As to the character of Slicker, that will be developed as this narrative progresses.

"Yes, yes; I must have money," muttered the young man, while Slicker lighted a fresh cigar from the ashes of his old one, and composed himself in his chair with the air of a man on good terms with himself and the world at large.

"Wal, guv'nor, thet's about all ez we hev ter talk 'bout, I suppose," remarked Slicker, after five minutes' quiet smoking. "Thet is, ez fur ez this job is consarned. You be 'round hyar at three o'clock, or a little afore. Stand under thet maple tree 'cross ther street, an' watch. Ef yer don't see nothin' by half-past, you kin go home, 'cause it must be done by thet time, or not at all. It will be gittin' daylight 'bout then."

"Very well."

"Now, 'bout this hyar ball game ter-morrer."

Are yer goin' to fix it fer me? It'll be er big thing fer you, Mister Scott, ez well ez fer me. Let the Diamond Stars of New York beat ther Albany, an' there'll be er pot o' money to divide. Thar's close on ter \$5,000 on ther Stars in the Fourth Ward. Yer know ther ward is jist full o' base-ball admirers, and they've put up ther money. Then ther fellers in Albany ain't slow, and they're jist as sure uv ther club as the New Yorkers."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"A good deal of ther money is put up on both sides in New York, you understand."

"Well?"

"Let ther Stars win an' thar is \$500 for you—"

"And how much for yourself?" asked Scott, quickly.

"A thousand! Oh, don't yer fool yerself. I'm looking out fer Slicker," answered that confederate, with a grin.

"I don't like to be mixed up in such a disgraceful affair, and yet—\$500 just now is worth more than \$50,000 will be in another year," muttered young Scott. Then, aloud: "Very well, Slicker. I'll do it. I'll pitch so that if the Stars are any good at all, they will have no trouble. With you as umpire, and I as pitcher for the Albany, our scheme can hardly fail."

"In course it can't, guv'nor! Glad you hev so much sense, Richard."

"Good-night," said Scott, shortly, as he arose from his chair and walked to a mansion in the vicinity of the Capitol.

"Wal, good-night, ef yer goin'. Though I think yer might hev offered me another o' them cigars afore you went, jist ther same."

Richard Scott took no notice of this suggestion, but continued his walk, in deep meditation.

"Wal, go on, Mr. Scott. I know all 'bout you. Do yer think you're too good ter be my pardner, eh? Why, you low-down forger, I could hev yer sent ter Sing Sing in er week ef I wanted ter. Think I don't know all 'bout it, eh? But I do! Slicker Walker makes it his bizness to know everything that may bring him the ducats."

As Sam Walker uttered these words, he arose from his chair and shook his fist after Scott, while a look of malevolent hate took away what little pretensions to good looks his features might wear at ordinary times.

"Halloa! Who are you?"

The exclamation came from him with a startled emphasis, as he saw that he was not alone.

"No one in particular," answered a wheezy voice, as a man in the last stage of dilapidation, as to his clothing, and wearing straggling red whiskers that concealed nearly the whole of his face, except a red nose, stepped from behind the tree and shivered, notwithstanding the oppressive heat of the night.

"Tell me who yer are, or I'll choke yer ter death!" hissed Slicker, fiercely, as he seized the ragged sojourner by the shoulder.

The stranger shook him off, and drawing himself up with offended dignity, replied:

"I am a gentleman, sir, traveling for pleasure. I have stopped over in Albany to witness the ball game to-morrow, and I am desirous of borrowing the minute sum of ten cents."

"Fer whisky, eh?"

"No, sir; not for whisky. You insult me, sir. I do not drink whisky."

"I begs yer pardon. I thought ez that nose said whisky ez plainly as anything I ever see."

The ragged man was more dignified now than ever, as he simpered:

"It does not say whisky; but if you had guessed 'Rum,' you would have hit it exactly. When I ask you to lend me ten cents, I do so on account of this."

There was a rapid movement of the fingers of the dirty hand that he thrust into the face of Slicker, which produced an immediate response.

"Why didn't yer make ther sign afore?" he asked.

"I never use it unless I am obliged. I am here to help you with a job that you have on hand."

The ragged man had dropped his shabby-gentle whining manner, and now spoke earnestly and rapidly.

"Who sent you?"

"The captain."

"Wal?"

"Well, what is it we have to do? I did not get any instructions, except to find you at the American House, and then let you manage the job with my help. I had a good description of you, and you see I found you at once."

"All right. What's yer name?"

"Barker."

"What, Barker ez did ther bank job in—"

"Hush! That is all right. A man can have too much fame, you know," suggested the ragged man. "I have been laying low for a year, since I did that little trick, but the cops are still watching for me. This is the first thing I have been into since."

"You can't do nothin' in them clothes."

"I know it. But they are not as bad as they look."

He threw off the tightly buttoned ragged coat he had been wearing, and showed that he wore a very good one underneath. Then he pulled his necktie and collar straight, pushed out two or three dents in his derby hat, brushed some dust from his trousers with his hands, and removing his whiskers and wiping the end of his nose with his handkerchief, thus taking off the red paint, showed himself as a neatly-attired, clean-shaven fellow of about the same age as Slicker.

"I guess I'll stay at this hotel, Slicker. Let us go to your room and then you can tell me what I have to do. Well, and how do you do?"

The last sentence was addressed to a bright-looking girl who was walking hastily up the hill and was about to enter the hotel. She took no notice of Barker's remark, but he was not to be put off thus. He prided himself on his gallantry and always said that he was a regular lady's man. He seized the girl's wrist, exclaiming:

"Just one kiss before we part."

"You paltry omadhaun! Faix! I'd wipe oop the goother wid yer, av ye wuz worruth it. Git out of me soight!"

The girl wrenched her wrist away, and, at the same time, struck Barker a violent blow in the eye with her left fist.

"Take that, ye t'ief of the worruld! Saints above, I'd have ye to know that Norah O'Connor bees a dacent girrul. Kiss me, indade, ye thafe!"

Barker had been stretched on his back by the blow delivered with the healthiest good will by the buxom maiden who stood over him, her gray eyes flashing in the electric light, and her pretty dark curls falling in disorder over her flushed face.

A look of deadly evil was in Barker's face as he sprung to his feet, and drawing a knife from his sleeve, ran toward the girl.

"Ow! The blaggard has a knife, so he has!" shrieked Norah, too terrified to move.

"Quit that, Barker!" yelled Slicker, who saw the movement, and remembering the desperate character of his companion, had no wish to figure as an accessory to a murder before and after the fact.

The maddened Barker heard nothing, saw nothing, save this country girl who had hurt his dignity as well as knocked him down, and there was murder in the arm that raised the knife.

In another second it would have reached the girl, when, like a thunderbolt, something whizzed past Norah from above, and striking Barker in the shoulder, knocked him backward as the knife flew from his hand into the street.

Before he could recover himself, Norah had run into the hotel, and, too upset to say anything about the encounter, to the night clerk, went through the hall to her room in the rear of the house and cried herself to sleep from sheer excitement.

As she disappeared a young man who had been watching the controversy on the sidewalk from the end window in the third story, went inside, saying to himself, as a smile played around his mouth:

"I guess that hot ball saved that girl's life."

The young man was a handsome fellow with blonde curls and steel-blue eyes, and some of our readers already know him by his sobriquet of Double-Curve Dan, the Pitcher Detective.

CHAPTER II.

TWO STRIKES.

It was between two and three o'clock in the morning, and everything about the American Hotel was still and peaceful.

The occupants of the many rooms in the great, rambling house were nearly all asleep. Even the night clerk, in his comfortable chair behind the counter had dropped into a deep slumber. There were no trains to come in for an hour or two, and he was safe in assuming that he would not be troubled with new guests from any other quarter before daylight.

In the dining-room, which could be seen through a window from the office, the white tablecloths were already spread ready for breakfast, and the napkins, twisted into cones by the

deft fingers of Norah O'Connor and the other dining-room girls, looked like little ghosts in the fitful shadows, and gave the place an uncanny air in accordance with the mysterious hour. Strange cracks, thumps and whispers resounded through the corridors, and it required but a little stretch of the imagination to people all the echoing spaces with the wraiths of departed guests whose actual bodies were wrapped in sleep hundreds of miles away.

Some such idea may have disturbed the slumber of the night clerk, for he shook himself up in his chair and looked fearfully around him ere he again fell into a doze.

In a distant bedroom two men turned up the gas just high enough to enable them to see each other's faces.

Slicker and Barker, both fully dressed, were listening intently at a door that separated their room from that adjoining.

Barker's left eye was in deep mourning, proving that Norah O'Connor's fist was not to be despised, if she was only a girl. The decoration did not detract from his always rather forbidding appearance, and he looked anything but a desirable person to meet prowling about a hotel in the dark.

Slicker's countenance wore a self-satisfied expression, but his movements were full of decision, and showed that he was the directing power of the business he and his companion had in hand.

Stepping lightly to the window, which was wide open, to let in what air might be stirring, he looked out, and then, nodding his satisfaction, came away and whispered:

"All right, Bark. He's thar!"

"I don't care a durn," was Barker's ungracious response. "Let's get this job over. It is too picayune for me, altogether."

"Yes, I s'pose so, but yer can't expect allers to be on er bank lay, yer know."

"Hurry up!" growled Barker.

"He ain't got no light in his room."

"Well, you have one, I suppose?"

"Yes, hyar it is."

Slicker took a small folding bull's-eye lantern from a capacious pocket in the inside of his coat, and lighted it at the gas. Then he turned out the latter, and flashed the bull's-eye upon the keyhole of the door.

"You'll send a stream of light into the room that way," whispered Barker with a scowl. He had been in an ugly temper ever since Norah O'Connor blacked his eye. He never forgave an injury, from either a man or woman.

"Don't yer fool yerself, Bark. Thet's er dead-latch. Ther keyhole don't go right through. I know my biz."

"Well, hurry up!"

A bolt was pushed back, and then, Slicker, with a piece of bent wire thrust through the keyhole, turned the latch and pushed the door open a few inches.

He and Barker, each with a handy billy firmly clutched, listened breathlessly for an instant.

All was silent, except the measured breathing of the occupant of the bed, which was behind the door, and thus out of the sight of the intruders.

"Let her go, eh, Bark?"

"Yes."

"All right. Hyar she goes!"

With the greatest caution, Slicker opened the door wider, wider, until there was room for him to slip through the space, closely followed by his companion.

Their footfalls made not the least sound on the carpet as they stole to the side of the bed and looked at the sleeper.

Their excessive pains not to disturb seemed to be largely superfluous. Double-Curve Dan—or Dan Manly, to use his proper name—was lying on his back, with one arm carelessly thrown over his head, and the other stretched out under the thin bed-quilt, as if he had been very tired when he lay down, and had taken an easy position and kept it all night. His slow, measured breathing told of deep, dreamless sleep, and it needed no second glance to assure Slicker that he need not dread interruption if he proceeded with only ordinary care.

"Thar they are. How car'less ter leave 'em thet way," whispered Slicker with a grin.

"Hurry up!" was Barker's impatient response.

Under the pillow of the sleeper, but only partly under his head, was a small black sachel, fastened with a brass padlock.

"Do you know that thar's ten thousand dollars' worth of unset diamonds in thar?"

"I don't care if there is ten millions. What do you want me to do?" whispered Barker impatiently.

"Hold up ther piller so ez I kin take 'em out, an' give him er crack with that thar weep on uv yours ef he wakes up."

"I will!" fiercely.

There was no occasion for violence, however. The black sachel was taken away, and Double-Curve Dan slept on peacefully, without a sign that he felt the hands stealing under his pillow to secure a fortune.

"Good!" whispered Slicker exultingly, as he and Barker slipped through the doorway and noiselessly secured the bolt on the other side.

No sooner had they done so, than Dan Manly threw off the quilt, and leaped lightly from the bed, while an amused smile lighted up his frank countenance.

"This is funny!" he chuckled. "But, by gracious, Barker, you came very near ending your career to-night. If I had done what I could hardly prevent—burst out laughing, I am afraid I should have had to pull a trigger on you to stop your knocking my brains out with your billy."

He held up a six-shooter as he spoke. He had had it firmly clutched in his hand that lay by his side under the quilt, and the indications now were that he was not so sound asleep, after all.

He listened at the door but not a sound could be distinguished in the next room.

"They must have gone out; but, never mind, I shall see them down-stairs in the course of the day, about the time that they discover they have been fooled in that sachel. It wasn't very professional in me to let them take it; but I could not help it. It was the best joke that I have seen for some time. As if I, a member of the New York Secret Service, would leave ten thousand dollars' worth of diamonds lying about loose in a black sachel! I don't know much about Slicker, but I am surprised at Barker being taken in by it, I am indeed."

As he thus mused Dan lighted the gas, but turned it down very low. By the feeble glimmer, he opened the front of his shirt bosom and examined a flat flannel bag, that lay against his chest, and into which were sewn the gems that the two burglars believed they now had in their own possession.

"All safe," he muttered, as he fastened up his shirt again, and put on his coat and vest which lay on a chair near the head of the bed.

He walked to the window and thrust out his head. Then he hastily drew it back.

"So, I see the dodge now! They are in that empty room at the other end of the corridor. There is Richard Scott, too. Ah, Dick! Dick! I shall have hard work to save you. Pity—pity!"

The detective shook his head sadly, as he watched the proceedings of the two thieves. They had fastened the black sachel to a long piece of string, and were lowering it to somebody on the sidewalk.

The sachel swayed to and fro and bobbed against a window on the second story.

"If they wake up anybody it will be all up with Richard Scott, I am afraid," commented Dan.

The situation was a peculiar one. Here was the owner of the sachel, at the window, watching two thieves turning over his property to a third, and, not only making no effort to recover it, but actually in an agony of fear that the receiver of the stolen goods might be caught. But that we know Double-Curve Dan to be an astute detective, and as honest as he is keen, we might think that he was either crazy, or was in the plot to steal the valuable property which he had been intrusted to deliver in Syracuse the next evening. As it is, we are content to know that he had a good reason for his actions, and that reason will be made plain further along.

The sachel got safely to the sidewalk, and the individual on the sidewalk was in the act of untying the string when there was a loud female shriek and Norah O'Connor rushed out of the front door and grasped the man.

"Och! The shpalpeen! He's thryin' to joomp his boord, so he is. If I hadn't been gittin' up airly to shart the kitchen fadre, back and forth, he'd ha' done it, too. Give me the valise, wull yer? Yez can't git it away whoile Oi'm here, now, d'ye moind!"

The girl, who was in a tremendous state of excitement, was holding the black sachel in a grip of iron.

"Plug her with brick!" howled Slicker from the window above, disappearing as soon as he had given this valuable piece of advice.

"Halloa! What's all this?" demanded the clerk in tones of authority, as the idea that there was some sort of disturbance penetrated his sleepy brain, and caused him to come outside.

At this moment Dick Scott, for it was indeed

he, whispered something in the ear of Norah O'Connor.

"Phwat?"

She bent eagerly forward and looked into his face.

"Howly Saints preserve us, so it is!"

She released the black sachel, and Scott, without a word, turned and ran up the street at the top of his speed.

"Who? What? Which?" asked the clerk bewildered. His head was none the clearest under the most favorable circumstances, but at half-past three in the morning he was generally in a mental condition but one degree removed from imbecility.

"Och! Nothin'! Sure, Oi wuz dhramin'. Oi have to git up so airly in the soomer that I dunno phwat Oi am doin' half me toime," answered Norah, innocently, as she made her way to the kitchen and got the coal oil ready to start the fire.

"What fools girls are!" commented the clerk, in a superior way, as he went back to his chair. "Now, she's woke me right up, and I suppose it is no use trying to snooze any more. That four-o'clock train will be in soon. No rest night or day, for a hotel clerk, it seems to me."

While the clerk was yawning and grumbling in his chair in the office, Barker and Slicker were standing face to face in their room, listening.

"Wal, Bark, I guess ther job hez gone through all right so far, eh? Seemed ez if Dick hed some sort uv hold over thet girl, didn't it?"

"Curse her!"

"Why? Oh, yes, because she gave you that painted eye. Wal, you mustn't mind thet, Bark. Thet's only a love tap. Ha, ha!"

"Do you think it is wise to be chattering and laughing in here with that feller in the next room?" asked Barker, in a stern whisper.

"Oh, I didn't make no noise! You bet I know my biz."

"Well, I don't know whether you do or not, I think we had better lie down and be quiet till the morning. We are just as likely to be suspected as any one, and I am going to get away from here as soon as I can. As for you, I suppose you will—"

"Bluff it out. Yes, that's 'zackly what I mean ter do. Running away only brings suspicion upon yer. I should think you knowed thet, Bark."

"Nobody has seen me in the town or in the hotel—except that girl, and she doesn't know me. She couldn't tell what the man was like that she gave the—the—black eye, to. No, my safest move is to get back to New York as soon as possible. I've done what the captain ordered—helped you with the job, and now—"

"Say, Bark, did you suppose ez ther cap'n 'u'd send you all ther way ter Albany ter help me hook er sachel? Why, I'm s'prised at yer."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that ther job I have in Albany is only commenced with this hyar sachel bizness, and—"

Slicker stopped suddenly, and he and Barker both swung around toward the door that led to the next room.

Then their hands went up over their heads mechanically, as a hunted expression came into the eyes of both.

The gas had been turned up to its full hight, while, standing carelessly in the open doorway, a pistol in each hand, was Double-Curve Dan!

"What does this hyar mean, sir?" blurted Slicker, at last.

"Gentlemen, I am looking for a small black sachel," returned the young detective, in dulcet tones that made the irascible Barker long to clutch him by the throat.

CHAPTER III.

FOUL BALL.

THERE was a tremendous assemblage on the Albany ball-ground when the two nines that were to play one of the most exciting games of the season made their appearance in full uniform.

The Albany Club, in its white flannel shirts, breeches and caps, and blue stockings, and the Diamond Stars of New York in blue, with red diamonds, or stars, sewn in at intervals all over their uniforms, were mingled in an apparently amicable group. The bitterest rivalry, however, existed between the two organizations, and the forthcoming match was the outcome of communications and taunts that had been exchanged unceasingly for the last six months.

As many of the spectators in the twenty-five-cent seats told each other during the preparations for the game, it would be "for blood, and don't you forget it."

And now the people with whom we have al-

ready made acquaintance in the two preceding chapters appeared under different and perhaps more favorable circumstances than hitherto.

Richard Scott, captain of the Albany Club, was busy among his men, giving them advice on different points of play, and seeming to be anxious only to vindicate the claim made by Albany, that she possessed a base-ball club that could get away with the Diamond Stars of New York without even knowing that they had played ball.

Dan Manly, in the uniform of the Albany Club, sat on the players' bench, evidently wrapped in thought. He was a member of the Albany, because this was his old home. He had not played with the club for several years, and even now was only a substitute, with the probability that he would not take any active part in the game. But, he liked to be identified with the club, and was as deeply interested in the day's contest as if he had not another care in the world.

"Who's the umpire, Dick?" he asked, as Scott came within hearing.

"Hallo, Dan! Why, how are you? When did you get to town? You're all ready for business, I see," exclaimed Scott, heartily. "I have been so bothered over private business matters that I have not paid such close attention to the match as I should, and I did not notice who the extra player on the bench was before. I'm very glad to see you."

"And you, Dick," returned Dan, no less heartily, as he shook hands.

He cast one swift glance at Scott, and noticed the dark ring around the eyes, and the unnatural brightness that burned in them.

"Poor Dick! He looks in bad shape," he commented inwardly. "Well, well; a crooked road is hard traveling, Dick, but if Dan Manly can save you, he's going to do it, sure as he's born!"

"Now, then, thar, git ter yer places. We're hyar to play ball, not to hev discussions," proclaimed a harsh voice, and Dan started as he saw who was the umpire.

Sam Walker!—Slicker!

Slicker was dressed just as he had been the night before, except that he had put a gaudy silk handkerchief around his neck. In his hand he held a box containing an extra ball, in case the one in play should be lost. This was according to League rules, which, of course, were to govern the match about to be played.

"Good-afternoon!" saluted Dan, as Slicker paused in front of the players' bench.

Slicker turned toward the detective with a start.

He had noted him before.

"Why—why—how did you come here?"

"Easily enough. I just walked down from the hotel."

"But—but—I thought you had lost some di'mun's, you said, and that you'd be doin' nothin' else but huntin' 'em up?"

"Oh, I am on the track of them, and I have no fear but that I shall find them before I leave Albany. I hope you have pardoned me for my rather rude behavior to you and your interesting friend, Mr.—what's his name?—Barker. You see, I had just discovered my loss, and I was so excited that I was disposed to suspect the most unlikely persons."

The young detective said this with so much apparent earnestness, that Slicker's usual effrontery came to his aid at once, and it was with much virtuous indignation that he returned:

"Yes, that wuzn't er very nice thing ter do—ter break inter er gentleman's bedroom at three o'clock in ther mornin', an' point a pistol at his head. I've killed er man fer less than that when I wuz on ther plains."

"Then I'm lucky to be alive!"

A general yell from the impatient audience brought the colloquy to a close, and it having been decided that the Diamond Stars should take the bat first, the Albany took their positions in the field.

Dick Scott was walking toward the pitcher's box, when Dan Manly called him back.

"What is it, Dan?"

"Come here. I want to speak to you a moment."

"What in thunder is he after, I wonder?" muttered Slicker, who, in the umpire's position behind the catcher, was looking suspiciously at the detective. "Scott don't know ez he's ther duck we took ther di'mun's from. Perhaps there may be somethin' in ther wind about 'em!"

"Dick, I want to pitch this game," answered Dan, coming straight to the point as his custom was.

Richard Scott turned pale, and the dark rings around his eyes became awfully distinct in contrast with his white cheeks.

"What for?"

"I don't think that you are in a proper condition to play a winning game."

"Why?"

"That is my opinion, and that is why I am to play. You are not in good health. You look as if you had been up all night, and if I did not know you so well, I should think you had been guilty of some crime."

"Well, how long is ther game ter wait?" thundered the umpire at this juncture.

"Dick, I am going to pitch."

"No, no; you cannot! I have a great deal at stake on this game. My—my—reputation, and—"

"Your honor," put in Dan, in a hollow voice.

"Yes—my honor!"

"But, it will be preserved only by your not playing to-day. I will pitch!"

"Now, what's all this hyar? You two fellers hev been er chinnin' over hyar long enough. Dick, git inter ther box. We can't keep ther public er waitin' no longer," exhorted Slicker, as he walked over to the two.

"Mr. Scott is not able to pitch the game this afternoon," observed the detective, quietly.

"He ain't? Wal, who's er goin' ter do it?"

"I am."

"You? Not much you ain't, my cove! I don't know nothin' 'bout you, an' the Albany Club don't know nothin' 'bout you. Scott was all right ten minutes ago. He'll hev ter pitch."

"As for your not knowing anything about me, that is of no consequence. The Albany know me well enough as Double-Curve Dan. I intend to pitch this game, Slicker!"

"But, Dan—" commenced Scott.

"You heard what I said, Dick. I am doing it for you, and you will understand why afterwards if you do not already. Be wise now, my boy, while you can."

"I object ter this hyar. I'm ther umpire—"

"Certainly," interrupted Dan Manly, "and according to League rules, have certain duties to perform. But selecting a pitcher for either side is not one of them. That is for the captain to say, Slicker."

"And what does ther captain say?" demanded the umpire, scowling significantly at Scott.

Before Dick could answer Dan whispered a few words in his ear, that again drove the color from his cheeks.

"No, it can't be!" he gasped, inarticulately to the others.

"I shall pitch the game, shall I not?" asked the detective, quietly.

"Yes, if you will."

Scott sunk upon the bench, while Dan walked forward bestowing a careless smile upon Slicker, as he passed him, and stepping up to the catcher, told him in a few words, how best to catch his double-curve balls.

"Play ball!" shouted the umpire.

Young Scott was watching the proceedings mechanically, but his thoughts were evidently not on the game. He had received a shock, and it had been communicated in the few words whispered in his ear by the Pitcher Detective.

The New Yorker man at the bat had heard of Double-Curve Dan and his difficult balls, and was prepared for something tough.

He got it. Dan held the ball before his face for a moment, and then, with a graceful slow motion, sent it wabbling toward the batsman.

The ball twisted and turned until half-way to the home-plate; then it flew out to the right until three-quarters of the distance had been covered, when it careened to the left, and sped past the batsman into the hands of the catcher.

The New Yorker at the bat was an old and wary player, and did not waste his energy on a ball he knew he could not hit.

Dan had given him a good ball, but Slicker had "called" it. If he could give the batsman his "base on balls" he was determined to do it.

Dan looked in surprise at the umpire, but he was too well-trained a player to raise any objection. He knew that the League rules forbade any questioning of the actions of the umpire, and would not be the person to set a bad example, like a poor soldier.

"High ball!" requested the batsman, and the pitcher zig-zagged one over the home plate, at which the New Yorker slashed with all his might but missed it, skillful as was the stroke.

Yells of triumph went up from the spectators, who were naturally largely composed of sympathizers with the Albany, and with whom Dan was a prime favorite.

"One strike!" proclaimed Slicker, with a

very bad grace. He dared not ignore an obvious fact.

Another of Dan's double-curves brought two strikes, and the now thoroughly excited batsman spit on his hands and prepared to do or die.

Dan smiled. He saw that the New Yorker meant business, and that if there was any chance at all, he would strike for a home-run.

"All right, my lad! I'll see if I can't puzzle you a little."

Carefully he poised the ball, and then, with the same motion that he always used for his double-curves, he sent the ball straight as an arrow and almost as swift as a cannon ball, toward the catcher.

The ruse was a good one, but the New Yorker was equal to it. For half the distance he was on the lookout for a double-curve, and had not quite got over his confusion when the ball reached him.

Then he struck at it with all the strength of his mighty arms. He caught it fairly about eight inches from the end of his bat. There was a thud that could be heard a long way from the grounds, the ball went spinning down center-field.

The excitement was intense, as the successful batsman scuttled around the bases.

A home run!

The center-fielder was running after the ball, which had passed him, high over his head, but by the time he had reached it the base runner was safe over the home plate.

Dick Scott was the only person in the field who did not seem excited over the really brilliant stroke of the New Yorker. Though it was one run for the other side on the very first man, he did not evince either pleasure or dismay.

He had found that Dan Manly was no other than the young man whom he had assisted to rob, and that Dan knew all about the plot to let the Diamond Stars win the game; so he could only wait for further developments to bring fresh trouble upon his wretched head.

As the reader has by this time surmised, Richard Scott was anything but bad at heart. He had got himself into difficulties by betting on horse-racing, and, to extricate himself, had dropped from foolishness to crime, as many a young sport does.

Dan took warning by the result of his one straight ball, and the next player got such a tantalizing delivery that he could make nothing of it.

"Two strikes" had already been called on him, and the ball having gone past the catcher, had dropped into the grand stand.

Slicker turned quickly and glanced at some one among the spectators, at the same time tearing open the box in his hand and taking out a new ball.

He threw it to Dan Manly, who put up his hands to catch it. Just as he did so, the old ball, hurled with terrific force from the spectators' seats, partly behind him, struck the pitcher on the shoulder, and sent him to the ground as if he had been shot!

CHAPTER IV.

AN EARNED RUN.

As Dan fell there was a general movement toward him, all the players on the field recognizing instinctively that the ball had been thrown at him with evil intentions.

But the pitcher was on his feet before any one could reach him, and the next minute he had cleared the board-fence that divided the auditorium from the grounds, and was making his way straight toward a seat on which sat a very mild-mannered young man with blonde whiskers and weak eyes.

The blonde young man had been deeply interested in the game, but he was the last person to throw a ball to hurt the pitcher or any one else. He enjoyed athletic sports, but only as an on-looker. It was doubtful whether he had ever had a base-ball in his hand in his life.

When he saw Dan Manly coming straight toward him, with mischief in his eye, he looked nervously around him, and appeared to be trying to formulate in his mind a suitable apology for being alive.

"I—I—" he began, nervously.

But, Dan took no notice of him, and the blonde young man saw, to his great relief, that he had not been singled out for Double-Curve Dan's anger.

"Now, Barker, I have you!" exclaimed the detective, as he threw himself upon a man, who, sitting doubled up on a bench behind the blonde young man, was trying to avoid observation.

As the detective's hands grasped Barker's throat, Slicker who had followed Dan without the latter seeing him, sprung between the two,

and giving Barker a shove, whispered: "Behind the big house, at ten to-night!"

The push sent Barker tumbling down a flight of steps that ended at one of the exit gates, and ere Dan could make his grip firm on his would-be prisoner, he found himself in the arms of Slicker, who was pulling him back toward the ball-ground.

"I hev a good mind ter fine you ten dollars for interrupting ther game in this hyar way," exclaimed Slicker, sternly.

He looked around him at the audience to see what they thought of this remark, and saw at once that it met with their approval. A base-ball audience does not, as a rule, like to see a game interrupted for any cause.

Dan Manly, although he knew that the provocation he had received should have been some excuse, was too earnest an admirer of the national game to object to discipline, even from Slicker Walker, the star crook.

He went down into the pitcher's box again, and the multitude settled into their seats, to resume their enjoyment of the great match.

The cowardly trick of Barker had not injured the young detective, although his shoulder was a little sore, and he put in several of his curves rapidly, one after the other, with such effect that he retired the side before Slicker had cooled down after his display of authority among the spectators' benches.

One run had been scored for the New York Diamond Stars, and now the Albanys were going to the bat.

Young Scott still sat on the players' bench, taking hardly any interest in the game. He had more important matters on his mind than base-ball, and since he had been compelled to break faith with Slicker, in regard to the turning over of the game to the Diamond Stars, he knew too well that he might expect to be pursued vindictively by the surly umpire.

One, two, of the Albanys had been put out without scoring, and now Dan took the bat, with players on each of the three bases.

He took the bat and swung it around his head to get the balance of it. He found that in batting, the bruise on his shoulder was likely to cause him some little trouble, but he bravely resolved not to heed the pain if he could only do his part toward securing victory for the club of his native city.

The pitcher was a tall, powerful fellow, who sent in balls with tremendous force, and generally straight, except when he substituted for them a delusive, slow delivery that was harder to meet than anything else. He made exactly the same preliminary motions for either style of ball, and it was not until it had actually left his hand, that he gave any hint to the batter of the sort of ball to expect.

"Now, Barney, give him one that will knock the daylight out of him!" yelled a boy from the cheap seats, whose parents had lived in New York all his life until a few weeks before, and who was therefore metropolitan in his ideas and sympathies to the very core of his heart.

Barney Muggins, the Diamond Star pitcher, did not take his advice kindly, for he scowled in a way that should have made the boy quail. It failed in its effect, however, for American boys do not quail very readily.

"Play!" yelled Slicker. "What are yer waitin' fer?"

Thus admonished, Mr. Muggins took his glance from the boy and measured Double-Curve Dan, as if to consider whether he should eat him up after putting him out.

Dan returned the look good-humoredly, and waited for the attack.

At last it came, almost crawling from the pitcher's hand, and then, as it neared the back, taking on a speed that threatened to send it a long way past the catcher and umpire, and into the solid wood of the back-stop.

Dan wisely did not attempt to strike it. Like the New York batter who had first faced him, he wanted to get used to the pitcher's delivery before he used his bat.

The ball had not been without good effect for the Albanys, however. In spite of the watchfulness of Barney Muggins to prevent it, the player on third base stole home while the ball was on its way. It was a risky thing to do, but Barney's awkward delivery was calculated to confuse the catcher, as well as the batsman. It was so in this case, and while the player behind the bat was chasing the ball toward the back-stop the run was scored.

"Rah for Albany! 'Rah for the home club! 'Rah! 'Rah!"

The yells that went up from the spectators brought an evil scowl to ugly Slicker Walker's

ugly face, as he motioned to Barney to do his best.

Another ball, and this time Dan hit it. With terrific force the ball went down center-field plump into Barney Muggins's hands, the concussion throwing him flat on his back, but without making him release the ball.

With that generous willingness to give due credit for a clever feat, by whosoever performed, that is characteristic of American crowds, the spectators cheered Barney Muggins to the echo as he arose to his feet with the ball aloft.

This retired the Albanys, with the score one and one.

The next seven innings went through without any change. Barney Muggins and Double-Curve seemed to be actually invincible.

As the Albanys went into the field for the ninth inning, Slicker went to the players' bench and frowningly addressed Richard Scott:

"See hyar, young feller, the New Yorks have ter win this hyar game somehow. You must fix it."

"How can I?" was Scott's despairing response.

"Don't care how yer do it, but yer must, somehow. Ef yer don't, I'll put ther screws on yer, now, sure! That check for \$500, is in good hands, and I hev only ter whisper ter hev it brought up ag'in' yer, with Thompson Carr's name signed to it by—"

"Hush!" whispered Scott, in agony.

"Oh, I'll hush, uv course. I'm only a-sayin' thet ef we don't git this game you'll find that check presented at ther bank, an' then you know whar you'll be. Now, make up yer mind right quick!"

"What can I do? How is it you know so much about my affairs?"

Slicker shrugged his shoulders and gave his favorite reply: "It's my bizness ter know. You heard what I said, didn't yer?"

He took up his position as umpire, but waited a few moments before letting the game go on, pretending that he had a stone in his shoe. Taking off the shoe and shaking out the imaginary stone, gave Dick Scott time to walk over to Dan and whisper to him.

"Dan, I wouldn't try a curve with that fellow. He has got it down very fine. A good straight ball will be more likely to balk him."

Without waiting for a reply, Dick strolled back to the players' bench, exchanging a hasty glance of meaning with Slicker as he passed him.

Slicker's head was bent over his shoe, as he fastened it on, and the look he gave Dick was nothing more than an elevation of the eyebrows and a barely perceptible turn of the head. But Double-Curve Dan saw it.

"So! Slicker has scared him into it, has he? And he comes to me and tries to mislead me, eh? Ah, Dick, Dick, my boy! You are in bad hands! You had better have trusted Dan Manly!"

The detective shook his head sadly, and then, dismissing the matter for the time, at least, with a heavy sigh, got ready to deliver his first ball.

He looked over to Dick as he stood in position to make the delivery, and saw that the young man's eyes were fixed upon him eagerly.

"Yes, it is all very well, Dick, but I shall not follow your advice," muttered Dan, as he carefully sent one of his double-curves to the batsman.

"One strike!" cried Slicker, with a vindictive frown.

The big batsman looked uncomfortable, and a flush of annoyance overspread his face. Confound those twists! He could not hit them.

Another double-curve, and this time the bat caught the ball and sent it into right-field.

The batsman made first base, but that was all.

Barney Muggins came next. He brought his own special bat with him, and it was easy to see that he did not mean to be fooled by any pitcher. He was full of confidence in himself, and, moreover, he was mad because the Diamond Stars had not already walked away from the Albany boys in the game.

The first ball he did not try; nor the second. The third he slashed at but missed.

A slight smile of amusement on Dan's face made Barney fairly foam. He would hit the next one or die!

He did neither. With excellent intention, he cut at Dan Manly's tantalizing twister, but he only thrashed the wind, while the ball dropped with a cheery slap into the hands of the catcher.

"Two strikes!" proclaimed Slicker, adding, between his clinched teeth: "Curse him! If Barker an' me don't make it hot fer him afore he gits out uv this hyar town, then I'll drop my name uv Slicker."

The man on first base had tried to steal second, but the ball was flying toward him before he had got a yard away from first, and he wisely ran back.

Barney realized that now was his time or never. He only had one more strike, and he must make that tell. Dan was equally determined that the batsman should not hit it, if it could be helped, and prepared to put in a puzzler.

But, Barney prevailed this time. He caught the ball fairly on his bat, and while he reached only second base himself, the player on first got home.

This made two for the Diamond Stars, and was all they got. In the language of the game, Barney "died at third." Another New Yorker suffered the same fate at second, and a third was "out on strikes."

"Dan, you should have taken my advice," said Scott, reproachfully, as the pitcher, somewhat tired from his exertions in the box, took a seat by the side of the young man, and taking up a tin pail of water, drank deeply and thankfully.

Barney Muggins, more disgusted than ever that the Diamond Stars had not "wiped the floor" with the Albanys, and foreseeing certain defeat if he did not prevent it, prepared to "pitch the innings of his life," as he expressed it.

He certainly did excellent work, and it was seldom that an Albany player managed to strike his curves, delivered at such an uncertain speed, that only the most vigilant attention served them.

Dick Scott sat quietly by Dan Manly's side, watching him and Slicker Walker alternately.

At last he said, touching Dan on the shoulder: "Go on, Dan; you are the last one at bat for the Albanys. Two men are out already."

Dan Manly had been apparently in a half doze, for he drew himself up with a start and looked around him with an expression very unusual with him.

"Um! I'm over-tired, I guess. I suppose it was being disturbed in the night, and playing here in the hot sun. I haven't pitched a game before this season. It isn't often I get so easily knocked out, though," he muttered, as he stood up, and, with a yawn, picked up his bat.

"Hurry up, thar! You're keeping the game waitin'. Everybody 'ull git cold standin' around this hyar way," bawled Slicker.

There was one man on first base, and both he and Dan would have to make runs if the Albanys were to win.

Dan saw this with the quickness of an expert ball-player, and made up his mind, notwithstanding that he felt so tired out, that the Albanys should win the game if he could influence the turn of the tide.

He took another drink of water from the tin pail and walked swiftly but with a little uncertainty in his gait, toward the home plate. As he did so, Dick Scott threw the rest of the water in the tin pail upon the ground.

Barney Muggins was disposed to be somewhat exultant now. He had put out two of the Albany boys easily. Now if he could retire the side and win the game for the Diamond Stars by the discomfiture of Double-Curve Dan he would be as happy as the President of the United States, he told himself.

Dan felt strangely dizzy as he took up his position at the home plate and awaited his ball. Somehow, Barney Muggins looked a very long way off, and he could hardly believe he was distant only the regulation forty-five feet.

"Play!" shouted Slicker.

Dan saw Barney throw himself into a paralytic attitude, and then, hardly knowing what he did, he swung his bat with all his strength. There was a thud and a jar running up his arm and sending a pang through his sore shoulder.

"Steady, Dan," he muttered. "Keep up for a little while, my boy!"

With staggering steps he ran around the bases.

"First! All right, so far! Second! Yes, that's good! But how blind I am getting! What is all that shouting about? Where is third base? Shall I ever reach it? Oh, yes; here it is. There! I have touched it. Now, for home! Ah, how they yell, and how everything hums in my ears. There is something wrong with me, but I do not know what it is. Where—where—is—the—the—home plate? I can hardly keep my feet, and the world is—pitch—dark! Ah! At last! At last!"

With a wild lurch, and a half-articulate cry, Double-Curve Dan fell across the home plate and the great match between the Diamond Stars and the Albanys had ended in a victory for the latter.

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CHAPTER V.
A BALK.

"THREE to two for the Albanys!" was the announcement that was proclaimed all over the city and flashed along the wires to New York within five minutes of the time when Double-Curve Dan had given the last of his ebbing strength to bring victory to the ball club of his native town.

In the first flush of gratification over the triumph of the home club, no attention was paid by the audience to the brave young pitcher who seemed to have given life itself in the game. He lay just where he had dropped across the home plate, with arms outstretched, and his blonde curls, from which his cap had fallen, glinting in the red sunset.

Slicker was in a boiling rage. He rushed over to Richard Scott, and shaking his fist in the young man's face, hissed:

"Now, look out, Mr. Scott. You have given me away, an' I'll do ther same thing fer you!"

Scott did not answer. He saw that Dan Manly was still prostrate, and a horrible fear took possession of him. He had reached the unconscious detective, and was raising his head when Slicker, who had seen the expression of fear on Dick Scott's pale countenance, pushed him away, and turning Dan over on his back, pointed from the dead white face to that of Scott, and shouted:

"This hyar man hez been murdered!"

"Murdered!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Yes, murdered! Poisoned!"

"Poisoned!"

"And that man did it!" yelled Slicker, pointing straight at the trembling Dick.

For an instant the players standing around Dan's prostrate form seemed petrified with horror and astonishment. Then they moved forward threateningly, as if they would visit punishment upon the murderer then and there.

Slicker grinned malevolently behind his hand. It was a striking group. The quiet, lifeless form of the young pitcher, the conscience-stricken Richard Scott, the evil-faced Slicker, and the players of both clubs, all with horror depicted on their countenances.

The seats for the spectators were nearly empty. The great crowd that had witnessed the game seemed as anxious to get away, now that it had been decided, as they were to get in three hours ago. They had not noticed that Dan was unconscious. They supposed that he was only sliding for home, as is often done in a close game, and though they saw that he did not rise immediately, took it for granted that it was only a whim on his part to remain on the ground for a minute or two.

Dick dropped on his knees by the side of the body of Dan, and, as his head bent forward in abject fear and sorrow, he moaned aloud:

"Wal, what are we goin' ter do 'bout this hyar bizness?" asked Slicker, gruffly. "I tell yer that this hyar boy hez been p'izoned by him," pointing to Dick.

"An' Oi say it's a lie!" cried a strong, clear voice.

There was a bustle, and Slicker was pushed to one side violently, as Norah O'Connor, her red cheeks redder than usual with indignation, came into the center of the group and looked around her defiantly.

Slicker recovered himself at once, and with a savage sneer, growled:

"An' what do you know 'bout it?"

Like a flash the girl turned upon him.

"Oi know that Misther Dan has been poisoned, so he has, and that you put the stoof in the wather!"

"What?"

"Oh, Oi saw yez! Ye didn't think ony wan wuz a-watchin' yez whin ye wint abint that three beyant, and—"

"Shut up, yer durned cat!" burst in Slicker, as he made a threatening movement.

"Hold on, there! Let the girl speak!"

It was Barney Muggins who thus interposed. He felt as if he would like to have killed Dan Manly when he was opposed to him in the game, but now that it was over, his animosity had evaporated, and he felt only sorrow for the young fellow cut down in this cowardly way by the hand of a secret enemy.

Slicker saw that it would not help his case to interfere with Norah at this juncture, so, folding his arms with assumed carelessness, he smiled contemptuously, and waited for her to go on.

"If you go to that wather boocket beyant, yez'll foind some of the nasty stoof in the bot-thom!"

Slicker did not wait to hear more. He dashed away from the crowd toward the players'

bench, on which the tin pail from which Dan Manly had drank was still lying.

But, if Slicker could run, so could Barney Muggins, and the latter reached the bench just in time to snatch up the pail before Slicker could get his hands upon it.

"Give me that pail!"

"Not much, I won't!"

The demand and the refusal were uttered in breathless, but determined tones, and then a pistol was pointed at Barney's head.

It was knocked away before it could be discharged, however, and Muggins, by a dexterous application of the "collar-and-elbow" principle of wrestling, threw Slicker on his back, and, at the same time dispossessed him of the pistol.

"Curse yer. I'll fix yer fer this hyar!"

"I suppose," answered Barney, carelessly, as he swooped down upon a small bottle that had dropped from the other's pocket as he fell.

"What hev yer got thar? Thet's my bottle, too! Blast yer, ef yer ain't er reg'lar thief!"

"Say that again, and I'll break your neck," shouted Barney, with sudden fierceness. "Now, come over here to the rest of them, while we will see what we will do with you!"

He seized Slicker by the sleeve with his left hand, clutching the garment in a peculiar manner that, while apparently not very tight, made it impossible for the prisoner to wrench himself away. In this way the late umpire was marched back to the spot where the players and Norah still stood looking into Dan Manly's cold, white face.

"Well, well, what is all this? Heaven save us! Why wasn't I called before? That's just like the young men of the present day. They can play a game of ball with all the science of a dozen centuries brought into use, but, when it comes to a sick person, they don't know as much about helping him as the Hottentots, who try to mend broken legs by dancing on the patient."

A short, fussy man in a white linen suit and canvas shoes, whose Panama hat was pushed back from a broad, red face, fringed with snow-white whiskers that were a continuation of the white curls running around his head in the profuse fashion suggestive of a jolly bald spot under the hat.

That the bald spot was there was shown when the gentleman took off his hat to wipe it with a yellow silk handkerchief at the conclusion of his harangue.

"Dr. Horne!" exclaimed Dick Scott looking up hopefully.

"Yes, it's all very well saying Dr. Horne," retorted the old gentleman, testily, "but you bring me to a dead man and expect that I will bring him to life again. Confound it! You are all alike. Have faith in doctors as long as they can accomplish miracles, but whar a patient dies through neglect or in the ordinary course of nature then our profession is abused through thick and thin."

No one answered him. The good-natured Dr. Horne was too well known in Albany for any one to argue with him. The only thing to do was to let him finish his talk.

He was not idle while delivering his lecture, however. He had opened the shirt of the young pitcher, and was now, with intent face listening at his heart and examining his eyes alternately. Not satisfied he took a stethoscope from his pocket, and again listened at the heart with its aid.

Then he jumped to his feet, and hastily directed the bystanders to seize the unconscious form of the pitcher and get him into an upright position.

"What? Isn't he dead, doctor?" asked Dick, eagerly.

A sudden hope thrilled him through and through.

"Dead? No! Do you think I should want to put a dead man on his feet? It is a simple case of laudanum poisoning, and if I had been called before the patient would never have got into this condition at all."

"Faith, Oi knowed he wasn't dead, so Oi did," put in Norah.

"You did, eh? Well, why didn't you tell other boobies around here, so that they could try and bring him around, instead of letting him lie on the ground, like an old rubber overshoe?" asked the doctor, who was never too busy to indulge in repartee.

The patient was now lifted up and under the direction of the doctor shaken soundly. The result was a slight quivering of the eyelids, and then the eyes opened, while signs of life could be discerned in the flush that began to struggle with the ghastly pallor of the cheeks.

"Good! Now, keep him moving. We'll save him, but it will be a narrow escape. The idea

of taking it for granted that a man is dead because he drops with exhaustion at the end of a base-ball match."

The irritable but good-natured physician was closely watching the condition of his patient while he talked, occasionally walking with him a few steps and feeling his pulse, or wiping his mouth with the long yellow silk handkerchief.

Dan Manly had been as Dr. Horne said, in a very serious condition and had not assistance arrived just when it did the young detective's career would undoubtedly have ended on the ball ground in Albany at that time.

When the bystanders began to move him up and down, or rather around the diamond, Dan's feet hung limp and useless, and he was actually carried by those attending him. But very soon the effect of his strong constitution showed itself in returning consciousness, and he took a few steps in an uncertain way, that soon became firm and decided.

The doctor noted this, and as soon as he saw that they ousg fellow was walking, he nodded his head with satisfaction, and was ready to preach to everybody in his vicinity.

"Keep him going, boys," he chirped, "keep him going. You owe him that much, for he kept himself going when he made that home-run that gave Albany the game. He stuck to it nobly."

"Cuss him!" grunted a voice in his ear.

"Eh? What's that?"

The doctor turned quickly, and met the scowling gaze of Slicker Walker.

"Don't take any notice of him, doctor. He's down on the young man for some reason."

"I dare say. Fellows with such a physiognomy generally are down on decent people. Get him behind me. It spoils my digestion to look at such a face as that."

There was a general laugh at this exceedingly candid speech, and Slicker's brow grew blacker than ever.

"I'll hev the law on all you fellers afore I've done with yer!" he growled.

"That's all right. I have a notion that you are going to get more law than you want," retorted Muggins, who still retained his hold on Slicker's sleeve.

"Halloa! What d'ye mean?" asked Dr. Horne, whose ears seemed to be preternaturally sharp.

For answer, Barney Muggins handed the doctor the small bottle that had fallen from Slicker's pocket.

"Hum! What's this? Laudanum! A little drop left yet. Undiluted, too. Ah!"

The doctor had taken out the cork, smelled the contents, and then tightly corked the bottle again.

"I got that from this man's pocket," declared Barney.

"Did you? Well, then, hold him tightly, for perhaps there may be people who will want to enjoy an interview with him. Funny, too, that an umpire should be trying to kill a ball-player. It's generally the other way. Ha, ha!"

The doctor's enjoyment of this joke was so intense that it nearly choked him, and he took a walk around the diamond with Dan Manly to recover himself, noting at the same time, that his patient was getting to be almost himself again.

"Doctor, I suppose Dan won't die now, will he?" asked Dick Scott, who had been continually walking with the patient.

"Die? No! Not a bit of it! He is worth a thousand dead men. Die, indeed! No, we can't afford to let a pitcher like that die off-hand. They are too scarce in the United States!"

If there was anything that Dr. Horne loved next to his profession, it was the national game.

"Well, then, p'raps you'll let go uv my arm!" said Slicker, sulkily.

"You'll do no such thing!" quickly interposed the doctor. "You found this bottle of laudanum in his pocket. The young man over there was almost killed by a dose of the stuff, and I have heard rumors to the effect that this fellow, the umpire, was interested in seeing the Diamond Stars win."

"How the—" commenced Slicker, off his guard for a second, though he at once recovered himself.

"Deuce did I find it out, eh?" supplemented the irate doctor. "Well, in my profession, we have opportunities of finding out many things that nobody would suspect."

He winked knowingly as he said this, and Slicker felt instinctively that the little doctor was a man to be dreaded.

"Faith! I have the mather booked," re-

marked Norah O'Connor, as she held up the tin pail from which Dan had drank the water that seemed to have been the cause of his sickness.

Doctor Horne took it and put his nose inside. "Ah! Not very distinct, but it is there, nevertheless. I shall have to take this to my laboratory, and then I think I can prove that it has contained diluted laudanum. Mr. Muggins—I understand that is your name—hold Mr. Slicker securely for a few minutes." Then stepping up to Dan, who was in possession of his senses though sick and faint from the effects of the drug, he asked him how he felt.

"All right, I guess, doctor, but I shouldn't care about pitching another game to-day."

The doctor laughed boisterously.

"Ha, ha, ha! No, I don't think those double-curves of yours would be very effective. But, see here, young man, you have been poisoned, and here's the gentleman whom you have to thank for the experience. What shall we do with him? Administering poison with intent to kill is what it is called in the jargon of the law, I believe it felony, that will send the culprit to the Penitentiary for a few years or I am very much mistaken."

"Poison?" echoed Dan Manly, with an irrepressible shiver.

"Yes."

"Hold him, and give him to the officer over there. I will make a charge against him, not only for attempted poisoning, but for—"

A sudden confusion, and Barney Muggins was thrown violently against the doctor, both rolling in a heap upon the ground, while Slicker, at the top of his speed, bounded across the inclosure, and disappeared through the exit gate.

CHAPTER VI.

A FOUL TIP.

It is the morning after the match between the Diamond Stars, of New York, and the Albany Club, and the scene is Doctor Horne's laboratory.

Double-Curve Dan, still pale and weak from his dose of poison of the previous day, is listening to a discourse by the doctor on the world in general and base-ball in particular. The young Pitcher-Detective has ostensibly called on Doctor Horne for treatment, but after telling the young man that he is all right, and only needs time to make him as strong as ever, the worthy doctor has branched off to the subject of base-ball, in which he is an enthusiast.

An electric bell at the doctor's elbow rings violently and a moment later Norah O'Connor breaks into the room.

"Oh, doctor, doctor!"

"Well?"

"Misther Scott—young Misther Dick—has been hurted, an' he won't let no one go near him but meself. Ye know, I used to be wid the family afore I wint to the hotel beyant. An' he's out of his head, so he is, an' I can't do nothin' wid him."

Before Norah's tale was finished the doctor's hat was on, and telling Dan to sit still and wait for him, he dashed out of the house, with Norah close behind him, on his way to the Scott residence, which was in the same block, only a few yards distant.

Dan, left to himself, looked around the room, and speculated as to the contents of the various bottles it contained. Dr. Horne's laboratory was a chamber of mystery to the ordinary patients who were occasionally allowed to visit it.

Considerable of a naturalist, something of a taxidermist, he had stuffed lizards, owls, sword-fish, white rats and other curious creatures, disposed here and there. With a taste for electricity, he had two batteries and a small electric engine that he used for grinding drugs. In fact, the room was a veritable museum.

His greatest treasure, however, was what he called a "lung cabinet." A large glass closet, with an iron and steel door behind, fastened with great bolts and knobs, and fitted inside with a chair. The cabinet could be made perfectly air-tight at will.

Its use was to afford relief to persons with pulmonary complaints. The patient was put inside, the door fastened, and then, by an ingenious arrangement, the air in the interior was rarefied until it was exactly of the same nature as that of Colorado and other mountainous sections of the country where consumptives so often go for relief.

Dr. Horne had but lately procured this cabinet, and he was as pleased with it as any child with a new toy.

Dan got up and looked at the cabinet from all sides, and at last got inside and sat down in the chair. He smiled as he looked through the

thick plate glass, and thought how he must resemble a wax figure in a show-case.

"I guess I can't be seen very easily from the outside, either," he muttered. "The cabinet is in a rather dark corner, and the whole interior must be in deep shadow."

He yawned and leaned back in the soft, comfortable chair. It was just the sort of rest to invite repose, and the effects of the drug had not entirely evaporated from his brain even yet. He nodded two or three times, caught himself, wondered how long the doctor would be, nodded again, caught himself, and then, letting his head drop back on the soft cushions, went to sleep.

"Move gently, Bark. I don't know but what thar may be some one in ther house besides ther old woman. Thar is ther place, ther bottom drawer in thet desk."

These words in a hoarse whisper came to the ear of Dan Manly with unmistakable distinctness through the open doorway in the back of the cabinet. Owing to the peculiar arrangement of the room, and the situation of the cabinet in it, the sounds reached the interior of the cabinet as if through a speaking-tube, and awoke the detective from a by no means light slumber.

Without moving his head, he allowed his gaze to travel around the room through the plate glass window.

Slicker Walker and Barker were standing in front of the doctor's old-fashioned desk, which was surmounted by a bookcase with glass doors, containing, besides many valuable volumes, a number of curiosities of a generally ghastly character.

The backs of the men were toward Dan, but he recognized both at a glance. Slicker's dress was the same in which we have seen him hitherto, but Barker had again transformed himself into the drunken tramp that he appeared to be when we first made his acquaintance.

"So, Sam Walker, you venture right in the lion's den, do you?" observed the detective, inaudibly, to himself.

Secure in the knowledge that he could not be seen unless the intruders came close to the cabinet and peered through the glass windows, he sat and watched their proceedings at his ease.

Barker knelt down, and, with a small steel wedge that he took from his vest pocket, forced open the bottom drawer of the desk, in accordance with Slicker's suggestion.

The detective saw that the thieves were well-informed as to Dr. Horne's habits. The drawer was full of greenbacks, specie and negotiable Government bonds. The doctor, while having the ordinary faith of a business man in banks, liked to keep plenty of money ready to his hand. It was a whim of his, and he was rich enough to indulge it.

"How much do you s'pose thar is in here?" asked Barker, his eyes sparkling as he saw the wealth lying before them.

"Thar's in the neighborhood uv \$50,000, an' it's all ours. Stow it away in yer pockets, while I look around this hyar place for something else."

"What does he want, I wonder?" commented the detective, as he saw Slicker examining the bottles that littered a small marble-top table near the front of the cabinet.

Barker was busy at the drawer. He was stowing away the money about his clothes. His whole suit seemed to be made up of capacious pockets, and no matter what he put into them, there was nothing to be seen by the casual observer.

Slicker, strangely enough, did not seem to care so much about the money as to search among the doctor's bottles and glasses. Not that he was wholly regardless of Barker's proceedings, but he did not pay them that close attention that he would under ordinary circumstances.

"Cuss him! Whar kin he hev put it," grumbled Slicker. "Once let me git thet, an' I sha'n't keer so much ef they do git me. They can't hold me for nothin' than 'cept on s'picion, an' ther captain bez money 'nuff ter git me out of thet."

"Has he?" murmured Dan, to whom every word came, owing to the peculiar acoustic properties of the room already referred to. "I think the captain will have to be a little smarter than I have found him to save you from Sing Sing when I get fairly on your track."

Slicker took up each small bottle on the table, examined it, and put it down with an air of disgust. Then he went to the book-case and tried to open the glass doors. They were locked.

"Never mind. I kin see all I want without heving them open," he said, musingly.

Suddenly he slapped his right fist into his open left hand, and exclaimed, triumphantly:

"Thar it is, by thunder! A one-ounce bottle 'ith an old cork, 'ith sealin'-wax on top. Give me thet jimmy, Bark."

He hastily took from his companion the small steel wedge, and in a twinkling had forced open the glass doors, and taken a small bottle from a corner of a shelf, where it had been half-concealed by a big book that had fallen to one side.

"Don't see what you are making such a fuss over that bottle for," was Barker's rather surprised remark, as, having finished his job at the drawer, he stood up and stretched himself. "Has it had whisky in it, that you want to smell, or what?"

"Oh, it's just a notion I hev, that's all," answered Slicker, with assumed carelessness, though he could hardly repress his exultation at having secured what he knew would be dangerous evidence against him if he should find himself on trial for felonious poisoning.

"So," muttered Dan, in his chair, "that is what he is after, eh? He wants to get that laudanum bottle to destroy it. He seems more afraid of the possible charge of attempted murder than the certain one of burglary. What funny fellows these professional thieves are!"

Dan Manly smiled to himself. His profession of detective made it imperative on him to study the ways and weaknesses of the criminal classes, and he found it a most interesting occupation.

Slicker put the bottle in his pocket, and was about to lead the way out, when the *portiere* that concealed the door leading to the hall, and thence to the street, by which they had entered, was drawn aside, and a young girl, in a dress of white filmy material, and with her brown hair drawn up in a bunch of curls behind and fastened with a diamond tiara, stood in the opening looking calmly at the burglars.

For a few seconds no one spoke. Then Barker, in his character of a shabby-genteel tramp, addressed the girl in whining tones:

"Is the doctor in?"

"No, but I am his daughter. What do you want?"

"Nothing, for myself, but my friend here is sick, and—"

The girl's quick eye had caught the fact that the drawer of the desk was broken open, and she realized that she was confronting two desperate men!

Dan Manly knew it, too, and was trying to get out. But the cabinet was so arranged that the door could only be removed when certain knobs, controlling valves, were placed in a proper position. Otherwise the pressure of the air on the door prevented its being moved one way or the other. When Dan had gone into the cabinet he had not closed the door, but had drawn it to a little way. To get in or out it was necessary to have the door wide open. A knob on a lever that had been up to the top of the door when he went in had gradually sunk during the last hour, and the door was irremovable.

In vain he pushed with all his might. He could not stir the door. He was wedged in between the edge of the door and the side of the cabinet.

Meanwhile the girl was hastily debating as to her next act. She had come into the laboratory quite by accident, supposing that her father was there alone, but she was too bright to be very much upset by any unexpected encounter with strangers whatever their character. Her father said she was the bravest little girl in New York State, and perhaps he was right.

Slicker and Barker watched her keenly, and when the latter broke off in his speech it was because she suddenly stooped and drew from behind a picture that rested on an easel, a large double-action revolver, which she balanced carelessly in her hand with the muzzle pointed at Barker's head.

"What are yer doin', miss? Thet thing might go off. It looks ez ef it wuz loaded," exclaimed Slicker, waving his hand deprecatingly.

"It is loaded!" replied the girl, calmly.

"Wal, what are yer goin' ter do with it? Me an' my friend only came in ter see ther doctor. It ain't a very nice thing ter be treated like a burglar when he's only sick."

"Are you a burglar?"

"A burglar? Wal, now, that thar's an insult, ain't it, Mr. Smith?" turning to Barker.

"Yes. It's the worst imputation that was ever cast upon my character," returned Barker, virtuously.

"Sit down!" commanded the girl, briefly as her gray eyes flashed.

"Eh?"

"Sit down."

"Oh!"

She moved a step forward, and alternately pointed her pistol at Slicker and Barker.

"Halloo, doctor, how are you?" exclaimed Slicker with a smile, looking over the shoulder of the girl at the doorway behind.

She turned to greet her father, and before she realized that she had been the victim of a ruse, found herself disarmed and in the hands of the two strangers.

"Hyar, this 'll do!" said Slicker, as he picked up an apron that Dr. Horne was accustomed to wear while making some of the experiments that entailed dust. "Hold her while I fix it 'round her mouth. Women allus do so much squawkin' when they git ther chance."

In an instant the dirty apron was secured around her mouth, and then the two ruffians looked about to see how they could secure her.

"Thar's ther thing! That glass box, whatever it is. Ther door is thick enough fer er jail," suggested Slicker, pointing to the cabinet, in which Dan, convinced that he could not escape, had sunk into the chair in despair, thus being out of sight of any one looking into it through the half open doorway at the back.

The captors of the young girl dragged her across the floor toward the cabinet. Barker seized the knob already referred to and pushed it up. He did not understand its exact purpose, but he took it for granted that it was a fastening, and that to open the door it was necessary to push it up.

The door yielded to his pull, and without looking to see whether there was any one inside, they thrust the young girl upon the chair, and closing the door with a slam, pulled down the lever and secured it.

CHAPTER VII.

A PASSED BALL.

"HALLOO, so the young fellow got tired of waiting, eh? I wasn't so very long, either. Sit down, Dick, sit down. I'll be here directly. I just want to speak to Clara a moment."

It was Dr. Horne's cheery voice, and he was ushering into his laboratory, Richard Scott. Having seen the young man seated in his own chair the doctor left the room, talking all the way down the hall.

Dick leaned back listlessly and appeared wrapped in thought. He had a bandage around his head, held in place by a black silk handkerchief. His face was even paler than on the day before, when Dan had remarked his lack of color and spirits on the ball-field.

"I feel quite faint," he muttered, as he put his hand to his forehead. "That blow on the head has not done me any good, I am afraid. I wonder whether the doctor has any ammonia in his laboratory. I suppose he has somewhere."

He pulled open the glass door of the bookcase, which Slicker had not troubled to fasten, and searched among the bottles for a certain four-ounce bottle of peculiar shape that he now remembered to have seen in the doctor's hands on a previous occasion, and to have noticed bearing the label "Aqua Ammonia."

He rattled the bottles about and nearly upset a glass jar, in which a baby, preserved in alcohol, held out its arms as if asking to be taken out, in such a natural manner as to be calculated to disturb weak nerves.

"What ghastly toys doctors keep in their cabinets," he grumbled. "The more horrors they can get together the better pleased they are, it seems to me. Where is that ammonia? I thought he kept it somewhere on these shelves."

His eye caught the drawer in the desk, pulled out a little way.

"Perhaps it is in there. You never can tell where Doctor Horne is likely to put things."

He knelt down and opened wide the drawer. "Halloo! Here are some loose gold coins, a bank-book and a bundle of canceled checks. I must have dropped upon the doctor's strong box, surely."

"Clara!" cried Dr. Horne's voice, and at the same instant the doctor himself entered the room.

He glanced hastily at Dick, and a frown wrinkled his brow.

"Dick!"

"Halloo!"

"What are you doing there?"

Without waiting for a reply, the doctor stepped over to the drawer, before which Dick Scott was still kneeling, and looked in. One glance was enough.

"Richard Scott, I have been robbed!"

He spoke in quiet, measured tones, but it was evident that he was holding back an explosion of wrath only by determined effort.

"Robbed?"

"Yes, sir; and I find you, Richard Scott, the son of my old friend, the young man whom I

expected to be my son-in-law, in front of the drawer, which has been broken open."

"Doctor Horne—"

"Silence, sir!" interrupted Dr. Horne, sternly. "I do not wish to hear any explanations from a thief. You have not been away from the room, and the money is about you. Take it out of your pockets and put it back. Then, before you leave this house forever, tell me how much your difficulties are, and how much you need to put you straight with the world. Then—"

"But, Doctor Horne—"

"Silence, I say. Let me finish. I will give you what you need, and on your promise to let this, which I believe is your first crime, be your last, I pledge you my word not to expose you. But, understand, you must not see or speak to my daughter again."

Dr. Horne's usually jolly red face wore a look of grief that told how deeply he felt the supposed villainy of the young man. He cared nothing for the money. He was a rich man, and the loss of \$50,000, though it would cause him considerable embarrassment temporarily, would not affect him permanently. He had dozens of millionaires in his list of patients, and his services were often required in New York for cases where his fees were almost fabulous. But, as he always said, when the subject of heavy fees came up in his presence, there was only one Dr. Horne of Albany, and his price was so much. If the patient thought Dr. Smith, Dr. Jones or Dr. Brown, would do as well, let him get those gentlemen to attend him. Dr. Horne did not care. But when he named a fee he should insist upon it.

"Doctor Horne," burst out Dick Scott again, and this time he took no notice of the old gentleman's demand for silence. "I am not a thief, and if you were not much older than I, and one whom I respect as much as I do my own father, I would knock you down for the word you have applied to me."

"Not a thief? Didn't I find you kneeling known in front of my money drawer with your hands inside it? Didn't I catch you in the very act? And then you tell me you're not a thief?"

The doctor was losing control of his temper. Dick Scott, standing straight, with his arms folded, returned the doctor's scornful glance without answering.

"Empty your pockets, sir!" thundered the old gentleman.

"What?"

"Empty your pockets, I say!"

"I will not."

"You refuse?"

"I do, emphatically."

"And you are not a thief?" with a sneer.

"It is because I am not a thief that I refuse to do what only a thief should be compelled to do."

"Very well. Then I'll send for the police. I'll make you prove your vaunted innocence at the station-house. The officers will not let you empty your pockets. They will do it for you."

"Sir!"

"Yes; you have refused my offer to extricate you from this scrape. I suppose you think that for your father's sake I will not go to extremities, but I owe it to society to give up a dangerous criminal to justice. You are a dangerous criminal, because your outward conduct has been that of a gentleman and an honorable young man, and you can thus more easily deceive unsuspecting people, as hitherto you have me."

As he spoke, the doctor crossed the room to the telephone and rung up the Central Office. With the receiver to his ear he waited for the answer, while his glance roved around the room mechanically.

Dick had dropped into the chair before the desk and buried his face in his hand. He knew that his innocence could be proved when the proper time came. Suddenly a thought struck him.

"Doctor, who was in this room when you went out? Norah said there was some one here with you when she came to fetch you to bandage my head, but she did not notice who it was. She was too much excited about me."

Dr. Horne dropped the receiver with a jerk, and whistled softly.

"Dick, perhaps I may be mistaken after all. That young fellow that pitched the game yesterday—Double-Curve Dan, as they called him—was here. I left him in that chair when I went out."

"Double-Curve Dan?"

"Yes."

"He is not a thief."

"Hey-day! What d'ye mean? Do you think \$50,000 walked away by itself, and that it broke

open the drawer to let itself out? Why isn't that fellow the thief? It lies between him and you, and since he has vanished, and you are Dick Scott, there isn't much doubt in my mind. I beg your pardon, Dick, for suspecting you for an instant."

"Suspecting Dan Manly is as bad," replied Dick, doggedly.

"Oh, docther, dear! Docther!"

Norah O'Connor, breathless, rushed into the room, and clinging to Dr. Horne, panted and shook her head violently, and could say no more.

The irascible old gentleman took the girl by the shoulders and shook her till her teeth rattled.

"Oh, docther!"

"There, there! I beg your pardon; sit down. I don't know what I am doing," said the doctor, as he pushed her into a chair, and hastily poured some brown fluid from a bottle into a wine-glass. "There, drink that."

"Phwat—is—it?" panted Norah. "Sure it isn't p'ison, now, is it?"

"Drink it!" was all he answered.

The girl did as she was told, and the liquid seemed to assist her in recovering her breath.

"Now, what do you want?"

"Oh, docther—Mr. Dick—two men kim to the house beyant, an' sez, sez they—'We want to see Mither Dick.' 'He be out,' sez I. 'We must see him,' sez they. 'You can't,' sez I. 'Phwere is his room?' sez they. 'On the third story, but it's none o' yer business,' sez I. 'We want summat outer it,' sez they. 'The deuce ye do! If yer do not go away this instant, I'll call the po-lice,' sez I. 'We want a black sachel,' sez they."

"A black sachel, did you say?" interrupted Dick, eagerly.

"Faith I did. That's phwat they said," returned Norah. "But let me finish me shtory."

"Yes, go on, for gracious sake, and let's get to the end of your infernal sez they and sez I," put in Dr. Horne, testily.

"Well, as I wuz a-sayin', they asked for a black sachel, phwat we call carpet-bags in the old cuntry—I guess 'cause they are niver made of carpet—"

"Get on with your yarn," interrupted the doctor, whose patience was quite gone.

"Yes, tell us about the black sachel," added Dick Scott.

"I told 'em they couldn't go up ther stair wid-out they walked over the corpse of me, an' wid that one of 'em, a phwisky-drinkin' kind of man, wid a big red nose, and phwiskers all around the gob of him, give me a shove that knocked me off me feet."

Norah stopped to fan herself with her apron. The recollection of the shove overcame her.

"Well, well? Go on!" from Dr. Horne.

"Thin they both rin up the shtairs, wid me a-pelting after 'em. They got into the room, and, divin' under the bed, they brung out the black bag that you took from the American—"

She stopped and put her hand over her mouth.

"What's that?" asked Dr. Horne, looking from one to the other.

"I don't know," faltered Dick Scott, as for the first time he seemed afraid to meet the doctor's eye.

"Thin," went on Norah, recovering herself, "they made a jump for the stairs, and d'ye know, thin blayguards actooally got clean away wid the sachel. Oh, my, to think that robbers should break into the house the very fu'st day I wuz there. I wish I'd stayed at the hotel, so I do!"

The girl was evidently in real distress, the more so as she realized that she had perhaps harmed the young man to whose family she owed the fact that she was prospering in America instead of starving in the old cabin in Ireland.

"Oh! What's that?" suddenly exclaimed the doctor, with a little shriek, as he put his hand to his face. "Something hit me on the cheek. It's some of those confounded boys out there in the vacant lot. It is always the way. A gentleman cannot even have his windows open on a July morning without some of those young rascals throwing stones into the room. It's a disgrace to the city—with the the State capital building within a stone's throw, too. Hang me if I do not have a bill introduced into the next session of the Legislature making 'beaney's,' catapults and things of that kind unlawful. I'll—"

"Oh, docther, here's some paper 'round the shtone!" cried Norah, interrupting the old gentleman's tirade.

As she spoke, she picked from the floor an ob-

ject that looked like a dirty paper ball, but which contained a pebble to give it weight.

"Let me see it."

Dr. Horne took it from her, opened it, and found a scrap of letter-paper, upon which a few words were scrawled with a pencil.

The old gentleman spread the paper on his desk and carefully adjusted his spectacles, Dick watching him impatiently the while. Then he deliberately read:

"If you desire to know who robbed you this morning, be at the third telegraph pole from the end of the railroad trestle bridge on the river shore at midnight, and bring with you the person known as Double-Curve Dan—but no one else, as you value your life. This is business. STRAIGHT TIP."

"P. S.—We shall show a black bag in evidence. Ask R. S."

"The murderin' blayguards!" was Norah O'Connor's comment.

"What do you think of this, Dick?" asked the doctor, turning the scrap of paper over and over in his hand with a puzzled air.

"I think that you had better go."

"If I can find Double-Curve Dan," remarked the doctor doubtfully, as he read the note over again to himself.

"You will find him," assured Dick.

"Think so?"

"I am sure of it," was the confident reply.

"Um!" grunted Dr. Horne.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUT ON THE FLY.

It may be wondered, that during the proceedings of the last chapter, neither Dr. Horne, Richard Scott nor Norah O'Connor noticed that the "long cabinet" was occupied.

The fact was that all were too much engaged with the other matters that demanded their attention to notice the cabinet, or even look at it. The only time that there was any likelihood of it being observed, was when Dr. Horne stood at the telephone with his ear to the receiver, and then, it will be remembered, an observation by Dick Scott made him leave the instrument without even hanging up the receiver, so that it still dangled when the mysterious message was thrown through the window.

But how were Dan Manly and Clara Horne faring inside?

When the girl was thrown in by the two burglars she fell plump upon the detective, who was squeezed, half on the chair and half into a corner. There was not room to stand upright in the cabinet, except behind the chair, and there the space was so small that any one but a very thin person stood a chance of being painfully squeezed when the door was closed.

Clara was so dazed by the sudden attack of Slicker and her confinement in the cabinet that it was not until Dan spoke to her reassuringly that she realized where she was.

"Don't be afraid. The situation is an awkward one, but your father will release us as soon as he comes into the room. It seems to be impossible for us to get out by our own exertions."

"Yes; a hundred men could not push that door open unless the lever is raised. And yet there is not a bolt or lock about it. It is all done by atmospheric pressure."

"Very interesting, indeed; but I would rather admire it from the outside," observed Dan, with a smile.

The girl had edged herself around so that she stood partly behind the chair, while the detective leaned over the arm on the other side. They could see into the room only from the front and part of the sides, and as the doorway of the room was at the back of the cabinet they could only conjecture that Slicker and Barker had taken their departure.

It is needless to say that, shut in as they were by the thick steel door, and double plate-glass, not a sound from the room outside penetrated to their strange prison.

They saw Dick Scott, Dr. Horne, and Norah O'Connor come in, and guessed from their gesticulations, about the nature of their conversation.

"My father actually suspects Dick of robbing him," murmured Clara, sadly. "The idea of such a thing."

"Perhaps not," said Dan, encouragingly.

"Yes, he does. I can tell from the way he is throwing his arms, as well as from the expression of Dick's face, poor fellow."

The detective did not reply, but he smiled significantly. He saw the reason of the girl's deep interest in the young man, and was not at all surprised by her naive admission a moment later.

"Dick Scott and I are engaged to be married."

"Don't you think it is getting rather close in here?" he asked, without replying to her little burst of confidence.

"I don't know," she answered, carelessly. She was rather offended because her important communication had so little effect upon her companion. She forgot that young ladies being engaged to young gentlemen was not at all a new thing in the history of the world, and that Dan Manly had probably known many engaged couples in the course of his life.

The detective was looking closely at the interior mechanism of the cabinet, and had squeezed himself with some difficulty upon the seat of the chair, so that, standing up in a partly-doubled attitude, he could bring his eyes close to the top of the cabinet.

Clara, for the first time, looked fairly at him. Notwithstanding that the cabinet was in the shadow, she recognized him, now that she looked at him, as the wonderful pitcher who had done so much toward bringing victory to the club of her native city on the day before. She had, of course, witnessed the game, but had, with several of her girl friends, left the grand stand at its conclusion, not waiting for her father, who was accustomed to go down into the field to talk to the players, and who did not think it proper for his daughter to accompany him on such expeditions.

Like most American girls, Clara was a great admirer of the national game, and she always insisted upon seeing every match that was played in Albany.

She had greatly enjoyed the match between the Diamond Stars and the Albanys, and she considered Double-Curve Dan's "slide" to the home plate a feat worthy of golden record.

Now that she found herself shut up in a little box only a few cubic feet in size, with the wonderful pitcher, she felt she was indeed in an adventure well spiced with romance.

The controversy between her father and Dick was still in progress, but neither she nor Dan could do anything to attract their attention. The glass was double, and a tapping on the inside glass would be inaudible in the room. As for the top and the steel door, they were thickly padded with dark plush, as was the chair. No opportunity anywhere to give a signal to the outside world.

Dick was pushing at the top to see if perchance it could be raised. He had found a set of hinges along one side of it, indicating that it was a sort of "lid" that could be lifted up by those having the trick of it. He either had not the trick of it, or it required something more than a trick to move it, for it remained as solid as a rock, in spite of all his exertions.

He was in a profuse perspiration, and his breath was coming in short gasps, the result as much of his struggles to push up the top of the cabinet as the lack of oxygen in the atmosphere.

"The air is getting foul, I am afraid," remarked the girl, now, as she began to feel an oppression on her head such as is always caused by being confined in a small apartment without ventilation.

"I suppose the doctor never intended it to contain more than one person at a time, and he has arranged the atmosphere to suit the breathing of that one person," answered Dan, thoughtfully. "Well, we must do something, or we shall be suffocated."

He put his face close to the window, but it was impossible to attract the attention of the doctor. He was deeply engrossed with Dick, and was not looking at the cabinet at all.

The air was now rapidly getting worse. Having begun to lose its healthful properties, the inmates of the cabinet noticed the inconvenience more surely than at first.

"I can hardly breathe," gasped Clara. "This is awful."

Dan did not answer. He was convinced that there must be some means of providing against such a contingency as the present, when, in the accidental absence of the doctor, the patient inside would be able to relieve himself from the effects of the confined air.

Suddenly he uttered a little cry of satisfaction, and simultaneously the girl felt as if the weight had been lifted from her head and she drew a deep breath.

"What have you done?" she asked, as she drank in long draughts of the air that seemed to come sweeter every moment.

The detective was standing upon the chair-seat, with his hand thrust through a small opening in the top of the cabinet.

He looked down at her with a smile of exultation.

"I thought there must be something of the kind for ventilation," he said. "This is a rather

complicated arrangement, but it purifies the atmosphere inside."

In truth it was complicated. A space about four inches square, secured by an air-tight glass cover, or trap, and held in place by a small brass button, gave access to an air-chamber that was in turn inclosed by another and larger one. Thus the air was thoroughly filtered before it reached the interior of the cabinet, and could be "medicated" at will by the doctor to suit the condition of the patient.

The girl here seized a cord that ran down the side of the cabinet, and that being of the same color as the plush padding, and following a groove from the top, had hitherto escaped the notice of the detective as well as herself.

Pulling the cord, it was found that it operated the trap that Dan had pushed open with his hand, so that the patient could sit in the chair and raise the trap when he found the atmosphere difficult to breathe.

"Funny we did not notice that before," observed the detective, as he still fumbled at the trap with his hand.

"Well, I am glad we have found it now. If we could only attract papa's attention we should soon be out. But that seems impossible. And—there is Norah, too. What is she talking about? She seems terribly excited over something."

Dan never ceased his operations on the lid of the cabinet, and his response to Clara Horne's last remark was to push up another section of the lid, which after being raised a little seemed to swing clear of some contrivance that held it in place, and dropped inside on a hinge.

"Well, I shall learn all about the arrangement of this affair, if nothing else," observed the detective, coolly, as he looked down at Clara with a comical smile. But there seems to be lids and traps up here without number."

A cloud of dust had fallen when the detective lowered the lid, and Clara's face was frescoed with it. The detective could hardly be recognized on account of the dirt he had gathered during his explorations.

He was tugging now at a large black china knob that he had discovered in one corner. He pulled with all his might, when he was checked by a cry from the girl.

The chair was moving toward the front of the cabinet, and she was being violently crushed against the thick plate-glass by the arms of the chair. The knob controlled the movement of the chair, and had nothing to do with the opening of the lid, as he had hoped it had.

The detective hastily moved the knob back again and released the girl from her uncomfortable position. Then he went assiduously to work to discover a means of opening the upper lid.

If the knob was to move the chair, he argued, it must be accessible from the outside of the cabinet, and he pushed and pulled at every projection and adjunct to the lid that he could see.

At last! A modest piece of copper wire that he had discovered among the intricacies of bolts, knobs, screws and buttons by the merest accident, and which ran through a small eyelet-hole to the back of the cabinet, had struck him as being something unusual. He put his finger on it, and with the slightest pressure a portion of the lid went up, disclosing an opening some three feet square. So nicely balanced was this trap that it remained just where it was placed, without going either up or down.

Dan put his foot on the back of the chair, and poked his head through the hole.

It was at this moment that the paper was thrown through the window, and he watched, with perhaps excusable interest, the subsequent proceedings.

He saw the doctor read the note, heard the words of it, and then listened to the colloquy that ensued between Dick Scott and the doctor.

"What are they doing?" asked Clara from below. "Why don't you speak to them, and tell them to let us out?"

"I beg your pardon, I will. But it was so amusing to hear them talking about—"

"You perhaps forget that it is not amusing to me, since I cannot hear their conversation," interrupted the girl, stiffly.

"True. Ahem!"

He ejaculated this last word with tremendous emphasis, and Dr. Horne started.

"What's that?" exclaimed the doctor, looking in every direction but the right one.

"A peddler in the street, I guess," said Dick, looking toward the open window.

"There is a vacant lot out there, and peddlers do not come there—only mysterious letter-throwers," answered the doctor.

"Perhaps it was the cat," hazarded Norah.

Dr. Horne frowned down this proposition so promptly, that Norah was abashed, and did not venture to repeat it.

"Ahem!" repeated Dan, louder than before.

The doctor saw him.

"Bless my soul! Where did you come from?"

Dan silently pointed with his finger downward into the interior of the cabinet.

With a look of intense astonishment, Dr. Horne wheeled a small table to the side of the cabinet, and the detective, dropping lightly upon it, and thence to the ground, said quietly:

"Miss Clara is in that thing. Hadn't you better let her out? In the mean time, let me remark that I shall be ready to keep the appointment with you and Straight Tip at midnight."

"I said you would find him!" observed Dick, quietly.

"It seems to me that he found himself," retorted Dr. Horne, as he opened the back door of the cabinet, and let his daughter out.

CHAPTER IX.

A CLOSE GAME.

It was twelve o'clock at night, and the heat of the last few days had been followed, naturally enough, by a thunder-storm that extended all over that part of New York State in which Albany was situated.

The rain came down in sheets, while the lightning cast a vivid glare over the river from one side to the other, and made an awful dissolving view of the elements, from darkness to light, and back again.

The wind whistled along the track, over the big trestle-bridge, and among the bushes and shivered rocks, as if it enjoyed the night, and were triumphing over the gentle breeze that had dallied with the July sunlight for the past week.

The lights of the depot twinkled as the wind made its way through the cracks of the lanterns and blew the gas about, and an occasional street lamp could be distinguished here and there by any one standing on the track of the Hudson River Railroad at the end of the trestle furthest from the city.

It might be doubted whether any one would be at such a spot on such a night. But there were two people.

It was not easy to distinguish their features, even if it had been daylight, for both were wrapped to the eyes in rubber overcoats, the collars of which met the slouch hats that were pulled well down to protect them as much as might be from the weather. Umbrellas they had none, for the wind would have blown them inside out or forced their owners into the river that ran turbulently below.

"If we do find out who committed the robbery, I think we shall have paid pretty dearly for the information," grumbled one of the two wayfarers in the petulant tones of Dr. Horne.

"It is not a very pleasant night to be out, doctor, I admit. But I have had plenty of adventures of this description. Did I ever tell you of the night I was thrown into the East River, and—"

Double-Curve Dan—for it was he—evinced such a decided determination to tell a story that the doctor threw up his hands in horror, as he wailed:

"Dan, I prithee do not begin to relate adventures to me now. We have enough on hand, without going back into your previous history."

The detective laughed. He rather enjoyed such an experience as the present, for danger was the spice of life that suited his temperament exactly.

"Where on earth is the third telegraph pole from the end of the bridge? I can't see anything but rain. I suppose the best thing will be to waddle along the track until we find one. I don't know what else we can do."

"I suppose so."

"Oh, you suppose so, do you?" was the doctor's petulant rejoinder. "A nice position for Doctor Horne, isn't it. The idea of a reputable practitioner prowling about a railroad trestle in the dark, and rain and thunder and lightning, when he might be comfortable in his own parlor, or better still in bed. The first thing we know, we shall find ourselves under arrest for stealing coal, or railroad spikes, or on a charge of wrecking a train. The whole business is disgraceful. Confound Straight Tip, whoever he is. I wish he had never come into my laboratory with his thievish fingers and mysterious notes. I hate mystery, anyhow."

"Well, I don't know, I—" commenced Dan,

when he was startled by a smothered yell from the doctor.

"Ow! Ow!"

"What's the matter?"

"Matter? Confound it! I've run into a post."

A flash of lightning, lasting for a second or so, illumined the scene and showed to Dan the form of Dr. Horne resting against a telegraph pole, while he fumbled inside his coat for his handkerchief.

"You found the pole, eh, doctor?"

Dr. Horne was too disgusted to reply at once. He dragged at his inner coat pocket and brought forth the yellow silk handkerchief that he always carried, and wiped his face. He had banged his nose against the pole in the dark, and he felt certain that his face was covered with blood.

Another flash of lightning enabled him to see that the yellow silk handkerchief did not show anything worse than dirty water that he had rubbed from his countenance in wide streaks.

"Hallo! What's that?" broke from Dan, as he walked up to the pole and reached for something over the doctor's head.

"No use asking me. I don't know anything," grumbled his companion.

The detective pulled from the pole a piece of folded paper that had been secured in a sliver of the wood.

The storm now had reached a pitch of terrific fury, and the tall pole bent beneath the force of the wind until it cracked again. The river water, lashed in foam-capped waves, roared at their feet and splashed up on the track. Under the trestle, a few hundred yards from where they stood, there was a turmoil of splashing and thumping that told of the escape of boats from their moorings and the wreck of sheds and timber from the wharves that were now mingling in a wild battle, and were being smashed to pieces against the great poles of the bridge.

"This may be another letter from Straight Tip for all I can tell," roared the detective, as the doctor and he stepped a little from the shelter of the swaying pole and found that their voices, in ordinary tones, were almost inaudible.

"I don't care if it is from Mephistopheles himself," was the doctor's sulky reply, which, however, the detective could not hear.

Flash after flash of red and blue lightning threw an awful glare along the track, and enabled Dan to see a little recess in the rock on the inside of the track. Into this recess he dragged the doctor, and turning his face to the back of the little haven, he unfolded the note and protected it from the rain with his person.

"What is the use of a letter in the dark?" growled the doctor.

"No use at all. But I always carry the tools of my trade when on a professional expedition, as I consider this is," answered Dan, cheerfully, as he produced a small bull's-eye lantern, with a powerful reflector.

He turned the light upon the paper and read:

"Walk toward the trestle. S. T."

"Walk toward the trestle," growled the doctor. "Why, confound his impudence! We have just been walking away from the trestle at his command. Does he think we have nothing to do but to trot up and down the tracks of a railroad in a thunder storm at midnight to satisfy his caprice? I believe the whole affair is a hoax."

"I do not," declared the detective, quietly, as he put the paper away in his pocket in company with the lantern.

The two men buttoned their waterproofs, pulled down their hats over their eyes, and, with Dan Manly in the lead, left the recess and plodded in the direction of the trestle.

The storm still maintained its fury, and they had to bend their heads and fairly butt their way through the wind and rain that disputed with them every inch of the road.

"Here we are," shouted Dan, at last, as he turned around and allowed his words to be blown into the doctor's ear. "Here is the beginning of the trestle."

"Well, and what now?" the doctor tried to say, but the wind sent his voice down his throat, and he could only gasp and grimace convulsively.

Dan tried to penetrate the darkness in the expectation of seeing the writer of the note, whom he conjectured to be either Slicker or Barker.

"Is your pistol all right?" he asked, putting his face close to that of the doctor.

Dr. Horner was not disposed to strain his voice again, so he nodded emphatically by way of answer and tapped the right outside pocket of his coat, which was covered by a large flap.

"Good! We may need it. The men I expect we shall meet will very likely mean murder if they cannot do without it."

"Pleasant!" muttered the doctor, in his throat.

"So be prepared. But do not shoot unless you are obliged. This is a job in which brains will tell more than brute force."

Standing to windward of his companion, as he was, it was easy for Dan to make his voice heard by the doctor, though difficult to get an answer. This did not matter, however, for the detective, being in charge of the expedition, only wanted to know that his directions were understood.

"Ah! What's that?" exclaimed Dan, five minutes later.

He had walked upon the trestle, going slowly toward the depot, with the doctor close at his heels, when he heard, or rather felt, an ominous thumping.

The doctor was now by his side, and, being close to him, could make himself heard by speaking at the top of his voice.

"It's a train coming!" he roared.

"Yes. Coming out from the depot."

"Thunder!"

"We are on the outward-bound track."

"Let us go back."

"We haven't time. We must get on the other track."

"How?"

"Jump!" was the laconic reply.

The two tracks, laid on ties from twelve to eighteen inches apart, were separated from each other by a space of about five feet, while far below the river roared and tumbled in black awfulness. To jump from one track to the other was a feat that would be none too easy in the daylight. Now, at night, with the wood slippery with water, and the wind blowing a tempest, it seemed to Dr. Horne that it must be certain death.

Dan, too, did not feel comfortable over their situation. A flash of lightning for a second showed him the wet ties and the shining rails, while a glimpse of the brown, muddy waters of the river under his feet seemed to be afforded him involuntarily.

And now the thump, thump of the approaching train was more and more distinct, as a long line of light from the locomotive head-lantern was thrown along the track on which they stood.

The situation was terrible.

But the flash of lightning showed Dan something that might give them a chance. On a very wide tie, the end of which was exactly opposite, on the other track, was a pile of fine sand, such as is used to prevent locomotive wheels slipping when the brakes are hard down and the rails greasy. There had evidently been a bad slide at this spot not long before—a very natural thing, considering the state of the weather—and the locomotive had dropped sand very freely to enable it to control its speed.

Without hesitation Dan jumped, his feet striking the sand on the wide tie, and stopping short. This was what he had anticipated. The great danger was that he might slip.

"Now, doctor!" he bawled. "Steady, and jump as you never jumped in your life before!"

Dr. Horne did not try to answer. The lane of light from the steadily approaching engine was very near now, and the clang of the bell, which the fireman who had just seen him, was ringing with all his might, nearly deafened him.

"Jump! For your life! Jump!" repeated Double-Curve Dan, desperately.

One look over his shoulder at the engine that was nearly upon him and Dr. Horne precipitated himself across the chasm.

His feet alighted on the edge of the tie, and then, wildly struggling to get a firm foothold, he felt himself falling!

"Dan!" he cried, in agony.

But there was no occasion for him to shout. Hardly had he realized that his jump was a failure, when a strong hand clutched his coat at the shoulder, and he found himself dragged across the wet ties and rails, while the train on the other track thundered by like a spirit of evil baffled in its prey.

Dr. Horne was in a very decided state of exhaustion, and for a second or so he lay where he had fallen, to recover himself. He bitterly regretted now that he had taken any notice of the anonymous note. He would rather have lost twice \$50,000 than have found himself in such a predicament as the present.

"Not hurt, eh, doctor?" asked Dan.

"No, but it is a wonder," grunted the doctor, ungraciously. He blamed the detective for getting him into such a scrape.

The train on the other track, a freight, was still passing when Dan, after assisting his companion to his feet, suddenly grasped his wrist with a vise-like clutch, as he listened intently, with his eyes fixed upon the black darkness beyond the trestle from which they had come. Then he made a hasty movement forward, still holding the doctor's hand.

"What is it?" howled Dr. Horne. "You are crushing the bones of my wrist!"

In tones that, while firm, would have betrayed to any one less excited than Dr. Horne was at that time the agitation of the speaker, Double-Curve Dan shouted in his ear:

"Another train coming!"

"Thunder! Where?"

"Coming in on this track. It is just around the curve at the end of the trestle."

"What shall we do? Jump again?"

"We can't. This long freight train will be in the way. It is slacking up now, and is very likely going to run up and down the trestle for ten minutes or so, putting on new cars and so forth."

"But what are we to do?" shrieked Dr. Horne, to whose ear the thumping of another train, with the clanging of its locomotive bell, were now plainly audible. "What shall we do?"

Dan tried to look up and down, but the black darkness was impenetrable. The trestle ran across an arm of the river, and there was nowhere to go except from one track to another.

At this moment the headlight of the incoming locomotive rounded the curve, and the train, at a good pace, bore down upon them.

CHAPTER X. A DEAD BALL.

LET US go back to Richard Scott.

When Double-Curve Dan and Clara Horne were found in the cabinet, and explanations followed about the two burglars who had stolen money from the doctor's drawer, there was a general exclamation of surprise.

"Phuy, sure an' wasn't that the shpalpeen as thried to kiss me in front of the American Hotel the noight afore the last wan," said Norah. "I wuz only going to shstay there wan more day, an' I think I moight have been left alone for that toime."

"And what did you do to the fellow? I suppose he got the worst of it," laughed the doctor.

"Indade he did, sorr, but not frim me. Faith, wasn't there a yong mon up in wan uv the rooms, an' didn't he throw a base-ball so that it hit me gentleman in the oye?"

"Ah!"

"An' afterwards didn't I foind out that the mon that throwed the ball was me fri'nd here, Dooble-Curve Dan, as they call him?"

Dan shook his head modestly but Norah insisted. "No, I will spake, for it's the truth Oi'm tellin' yez. An' I mane to say that he's a foine lad, an' faith if Oi warn't engaged to a dacent b'ye in the ould counthry I'd sit me cap at him, so I would."

There was a general laugh at this outspoken declaration but Norah was evidently in earnest and cared nothing for the mirth of her listeners.

"And now, Mr. Dick, I guess ye'd better be gittin' home, for your father wants to spake wid yez, I know."

This brought Dick to himself, and reminded him that though he had been proved innocent of the robbery of his father's oldest friend, Dr. Horne, he was still involved in crime with men of the lowest stamp, who would be likely to betray him at any moment.

"Doctor Horne, don't you think I might venture to go with you to meet those fellows to-night?" he asked hesitatingly, as he prepared to go.

"No," put in Dan Manly, decidedly. Then, with a bow to the doctor and his daughter, he added: "Doctor Horne, believe me I know who these men are that have written the note, and it will require careful management to prevent their getting the best of you."

"Danger!" cried Clara, whose quick ears had caught the word. "Do you think it will be dangerous for papa?"

"I do not," replied Dan, with another smile. "I will engage to bring him back safely. That is," correcting himself, "as far as human care can insure such a result."

"Besides, my dear, your father is not quite a baby, and perhaps he may be able to take care of himself under ordinary circumstances," observed the doctor, who did not care to appear before his daughter as a helpless creature who could not be trusted alone.

"Exactly, I counted considerably on your own reputation as a brave man," returned Dan.

This graceful compliment mollified the doctor, and he said, with a wave of his hand:

"Dan, throw open your coat, and show what you wear on your vest."

Double-Curve Dan did so, and revealed the silver star that proclaimed him to be a member of the New York Secret Service.

"A detective!" exclaimed Clara.

"Oh, Howly Moses! Are ye wan of the saycret police, what ketches murderers and sich?" said Norah, who was very much overcome by the revelation.

Dick Scott had known all along that his friend

Dan was a detective, but he had not thought much about it until now, looking upon him more as a baseball player, with phenomenal skill as a pitcher, than anything else.

"You think I must not go, then?" asked Dick.

"I do, decidedly," replied Dan.

"Then I give in. Doctor, do you remember that I came here with you to get some medicine?"

"Gracious! So you did. All this shaking up I've had in the last half-hour completely knocked it out of my head."

He pulled open the door of his book-case, and selected three bottles, from which he made up a prescription, that he handed to Dick, with the remark that it would settle his nerves, and relieve the pain in his head.

"All right, doctor," answered Dick, as he stepped to the other end of the room to exchange a few words with Clara.

"Hallo! Where's that bottle? I am sure I put it in here. Surely those fellows would not steal that!"

"But they would and they did," put in Dan. "I saw them take it."

"What good could it be to them?"

"No good, perhaps, unless they wanted to destroy evidence of an attempted crime," said Dan.

"No one would want to do that, except one of two 'men,'" answered Dr. Horne, glancing half-suspiciously in the direction of Dick, who was in earnest conversation with Clara, and did not observe the look.

"The man that took that bottle does, I presume, desire to destroy the evidence."

"Then it must have been that—"

"Sam Walker, generally known as Slicker, the umpire of yesterday's ball game. Yes, but not a word now, if you please. I'll explain later on," answered Dan, in a low voice.

Dr. Horne, mystified beyond expression, could only nod an acquiescence, and admit to himself that the game was getting altogether too deep for him.

Norah sat with her mouth open, trying hard to comprehend the drift of the conversation, but unsuccessfully.

A few more whispered words to Clara, and Dick Scott, with a farewell to Dan and Dr. Horne, beckoned to Norah, and left the house.

"A bright young man, that; but I am no judge of physiognomy if he isn't worried about something," observed the doctor.

"It would be strange if he were not, papa, after the way you treated him half an hour ago," rejoined Clara, with a little pout.

"My dear, your old father has been in the world many years, and he is not over-surprised when those he would have trusted implicitly prove to be unworthy of his confidence."

The conversation was taking rather an unpleasant turn, Dan Manly thought, as he bade the doctor and his daughter good-morning, with a promise to be back at eleven o'clock in the evening, ready to start for the rendezvous on the railroad track at midnight.

"You say my father wants to see me, eh, Norah?" said Dick, as he walked around the corner to his own home.

"Yis, sorr, an' faith, if yez will let me say so, he do be in a bad humor. Wid all the row Oi had wid that thafe who rinned up the shstairs, divil a wan of him kim out of his room to see phwat the ruction was."

"Ah!"

Dick Scott knew his father too well to be surprised at this. Mr. Richard Scott, Sr., was a dignified gentleman, who would not consider it his business if his house was on fire, provided it did not reach his own room.

"Well, sir, what is the matter with your head?" asked a stern, well-preserved man of perhaps sixty years of age, as Dick, with a face almost as white as the bandage over his forehead, stood in the library of his father and waited to be questioned.

"Some rascal attacked me on the street, I suppose for purposes of robbery, but I escaped with nothing more than a broken head."

"It's a respectable!"

"But, father, I could not help it. I didn't want to be knocked down and stunned, or—"

"There, that will do," interrupted the other, impatiently. "It is a very strange thing, though, that you will persist in getting into scrapes continually, disgracing me and—and—inconveniencing yourself."

Dick shrugged his shoulders. His father was evidently annoyed about something, and was prepared to find fault with everybody and everything.

"Is there anything that you want me to do, father?" he asked, submissively.

"Yes, there is. A quantity of unset diamonds—"

Dick started.

"What's the matter? Cold? You had better shut the window. Young men nowadays have such miserable constitutions that they are just as likely to shiver in July as in January."

"No, father, I am not cold. Why the temperature in this room is over eighty at least."

"I should think so—ninety-two, according to this thermometer on my table. But never mind about that. There are unset diamonds, brought to Albany by a young man, Daniel Manly, I think his name is."

Here he took a letter from the table in front of him, and referred to it, with the top of a penholder running down the lines.

"Yes, Manly; that's right. I believe, by the way, I have heard of him in connection with base-ball in Albany, but I never saw him, that I am aware of."

"That is right, father. He is a ball-player. He

is a member of the Albany Club now. He has a double-curve that makes him a terror in the pitcher's box, and—"

Dick grew enthusiastic as he told of Dan's ability, but his father interrupted him, coldly:

"Well, this is not the time for dissertations upon base-ball. These diamonds are consigned to me for safe-keeping by a customer of mine in New York, a lady, who thinks, wisely, that the bank of Scott, Golden & Co., is as safe a depository as she can find anywhere."

Dick Scott's breath came and went in short, quick gasps. This was a revelation to him that he would never have suspected in his wildest dreams.

"Well, father?"

"This Dan Manly has not come."

"When did you expect him?"

"This morning. That is, the 23d of July—the day on which the diamonds were to reach me."

"It is not noon yet. He may be here before long," faltered Dick.

"Here's a gentleman to see you, sorr," broke in Norah, as she unceremoniously opened the door and entered the room.

"Who is it?"

"He sez his name is Manly, sorr." Then, in a stage whisper to Dick Scott, "Sure, it's Double-Curve Dan himself, ef you'll belave me."

"Show him up," commanded the banker.

"Father, I'll go, if you don't want me," said Dick, as he moved toward the door.

"But I do want you. Stay where you are. I have something very important for you to do."

The young man put his hand to his wounded head. He felt as if he could not bear any more excitement.

"Oh, my trouble is more than I can bear," he moaned. "I'll confess all." Then, aloud: "Father, I—"

"Good-morning, Mr. Scott, broke in the cheery voice of Dan Manly, as the young detective stood in the doorway. "You do not know me, I presume, but I am very familiar with your appearance. One of the most prominent men in Albany, of course—"

"There, there!" interrupted Mr. Scott, Sr. "Let us get to business."

A thorough man of the world, if there was anything the banker detested it was the slightest suspicion or flattery.

The detective saw this, and taking the chair pointed to by Mr. Scott, he took out a note-book, and referred to it for a minute, while Mr. Scott sat patiently back in his arm-chair, waiting until his visitor was ready to speak.

As for Dick, he was the picture of abject misery. He felt that it was only a question of a few minutes when his crime would be exposed, and then— He could not think any further. He felt that his crime was known to the world, and that the hour of retribution had come. Bitterly he was exulting the evil into which he had, step by step, been led. His conscience was an avenging demon, from whom there was no escape.

Dan at last, with his note-book in his hand, addressed himself to the banker:

"Mr. Scott, I was sent from New York, on the 21st of July, with unset diamonds of the value of \$10,000, the property of Miss Eugenia Bulger, to be put in the hands of Richard Scott, Esq., of the firm of Scott, Goulden & Co., bankers, of Albany."

"Yes," acquiesced Mr. Scott, nodding his head gently as the detective proceeded.

"The diamonds I carried with me in a black sachel," continued Dan.

"Howly saints!" muttered Norah O'Connor, who had taken the liberty of remaining in the room on the pretense of dusting. She was a special protégée of Mr. Scott and his late wife, and had been in the family for a considerable time, until she had what she called a "fallin' out" with the banker, and went to the American Hotel for a few weeks. Now, that she had come back again, she resumed her familiar footing in the house naturally.

"You carried them in a black sachel, eh? Well?" said the banker, quickly.

"At the hotel, I put the sachel under my pillow, and—"

"Och! Look at Mr. Dick!" cried Norah, as she ran over to the young man.

Dick looked at her wildly a moment, and then fell from his chair to the floor, in a deadly swoon.

CHAPTER XI. A SLIDE.

THE young man had hardly reached the floor when his father was at his side.

"What's the matter, boy? What's the matter? I guess he must have been more badly hurt than I thought," said the banker, anxiously. There was no trace of sternness in his voice now, for in his heart of hearts, his own Dick was his idol, though he but seldom allowed his feelings to be seen.

Dan brought a glass of water from the hydrant in a corner of a room behind a screen, and it took but a few seconds to revive the patient, and seat him, weak and trembling, but otherwise recovered, on a sofa.

"Too much heat, eh, Dick?" asked his father, sympathetically. "I guess you raced too much on that ball game yesterday, too."

"I don't know, father. Perhaps I had better go to my room and lie down."

"No, stay here, where I can see you. I don't care about trusting you by yourself, while you are so weak. If you are not well enough to listen to business, then I will not trouble you. But just sit still on the sofa while I finish my affair with Mr. Manly."

Dick bowed his head. He felt that things could not be much worse than they were, and he might as well face it out now as at any other time.

"Now, Mr. Manly," proceeded the banker. Dan looked at Dick, and he hesitated. He saw that the young fellow was worked up to the highest pitch of excitement, and though, as the reader knows, the diamonds were not in the black sachel when it fell into Dick's hands, the latter had never examined the receptacle, and he supposed that they were still there and in the possession of the men who had robbed his bedroom.

"Go on, sir," said the banker. Dan, with another commiserating glance at Dick, continued:

"The diamonds were in a black sachel, but—I took them out before I went to bed."

"What?" cried Dick, starting up.

"Sit down, Dick. You are as nervous as a girl," observed his father.

"Faith, he's nervousier than a gurl," commented Norah. "That is, some gruls."

"I took the diamonds out of the black sachel before I went to bed, and put them in a safe place."

"Where?" asked Dick, eagerly.

"No matter. They were out of the reach of thieves, at all events, and, Mr. Scott, here they are."

As he spoke, he drew a small flat leather case from a secret pocket inside his shirt, and laid it on the table, keeping his hand upon it, however.

"How many are there?" asked the banker, with his eyes on the letter before him.

"I will count them to you," said Dan.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Dick, fervently.

"What for, Dick? You seem to be in a very grateful state of mind about something," observed his father, with a smile.

Dan, who knew the cause of the young fellow's thankfulness, deliberately counted the stones upon a sheet of white paper on the table, where they looked anything but brilliant, resembling pieces of dirty gum arabic more than anything else, as uncut diamonds have a way of doing.

"One, two," counted Dan, going on until he had reached forty-two.

"There they are, sir. The exact tally. Forty-two stones, of different sizes, worth a sum total of ten thousand dollars, or thereabouts. And I am only too glad to get rid of them."

The banker pulled the paper toward him, and carefully counted the stones twice over himself. Then he wrapped them carefully in the white paper, wrapped that again in another sheet of white paper, putting the whole into a large envelope, which he proceeded to secure all around with sealing-wax, stamping it with his seal-ring, which he removed from his finger for the purpose, replacing it carefully at the conclusion of the operation.

Dan Manly, Dick, and Norah watched him closely, and one of the three at least felt that he would rather see those stones in his father's possession than have a for-une for himself.

"I suppose you want a receipt?" observed the banker, at last, as he held the sealed envelope in his left hand.

"Yes, I suppose I had better have one," answered Dan.

"Faith, it's meself that 'ud want a sealed and soigned receipt fer 'ach wan uv thim lovely sbtones," remarked Norah, sotto voce.

The banker, still holding the diamonds, carefully wrote an acknowledgment of their receipt, and told Norah to witness his signature. This involved a great expenditure of ink on Norah's part, but her name, "Norah O'Connor," in bold letters that were by far the most striking objects on the paper, was affixed at last, and Dan folded the paper and put it in the secret pocket from which he had taken the diamonds.

"Good-morning, Mr. Scott," he said, as he moved toward the door.

"Good-morning, sir. When do you return to New York?" asked the banker.

"Not until to-morrow."

"Well, convey my respects to Miss Bulger, and tell her that I will take every care of her property."

"Very well, sir."

The detective paused at the sofa upon which poor Dick sat, and giving the young man his hand, whispered softly:

"Dick, you had better trust me entirely. There is a check of yours out that must be got back."

"What? Do you—" commenced Dick, falteringly.

"I certainly do know all about it. I know who holds it, and I know that if you will confide in me, we shall be able to obtain it, and save you from—"

"Yes, yes—I know. Do not say that word. I was mad with worry when I signed it. I hardly realized that it was forgery. I—"

"To-morrow morning, in my room at the American Hotel, at nine o'clock. You know where it is," interrupted the detective, putting a significant inflection upon the last sentence which made the young man wince.

The banker who was kneeling in front of his iron safe in a corner of the room, looked over to the detective, and he said no more, but nodding once more to Dick and Norah, left the house.

In another minute the diamonds were safely deposited in the safe, and Mr. Scott, standing up, asked Dick how he felt.

"Very much better, father, thank you."

"That is well. Now, listen. I want you to—Norah, I have nothing for you to do just now."

Norah was listening intently to the banker, who just now became aware of the fact. She took the hint and went down stairs to the kitchen. The banker continued:

"I do not care about taking these stones during banking hours, and at the same time I do not want them in the house all night."

"Yes."

"About nine o'clock this evening when it will be quite dark, I want you to take the package to the bank and put it in box E, in the big vault."

"Yes."

"You see, I have reason to suppose that these diamonds have been watched ever since they left New York by parties who would not hesitate to murder me if they thought I was carrying them about my person."

Dick shuddered, as he thought what might have been the consequences if his father had interfered with Slicker Walker when the latter was after the black sachel in that very house but a little time before.

"You are right, father. It would not be safe for you."

"No, I do not think it would," agreed the banker.

"When shall I take the stones?"

"They are safe enough where they are until it is time for you to take them in the evening. Come over here and I will show you the combination of the lock."

"Why can't you open it yourself when you want to give me the diamonds?"

"Because I may not be here at the time, for one thing. Besides, I think my son is thoroughly deserving of his father's confidence."

Dick hung his head. How sincerely he wished he was.

"Well, father, let it be as you say. I will try and be worthy of your trust in this matter, at least," he replied.

"All right, Dick, my boy. Come and look at this," was his father's response. Mr. Scott was in a particularly good humor now that he had got the affair of Mrs. Bulger's diamonds off his mind. Besides, he loved his son, and he felt grieved over his weak state.

He knelt down in front of the safe, and with his fingers on the knob, explained the combination, moving the knob as he did so.

"Place it thus, you see, Dick."

"Yes."

Whose face was that at the open window—a face in which evil tendencies were so plainly written that one could tell it for that of a man at enmity with the law at a glance? The face had been cautiously brought above the level of the window-sill, its owner standing on the roof of a summer kitchen, outside, and the eyes under the heavy brows were watching everything in the room just as Mr. Scott, the banker, knelt down in front of the safe.

The face was that of Slicker Walker.

When the banker began to explain the combination of the safe to his son, the eyes of the eaves-dropper glistened. He listened eagerly to Mr. Scott's next words:

"Having put the two 2's in a line, you makes four turns to the right to the 4, three to the left to the 1, a turn to the left again, two to the right, and—there it is."

The door swung open and the eager glance of Slicker rested upon the small inner drawer in which the diamonds were placed, and which, indeed, the banker pointed out to his son as their hiding-place.

"Do you understand it, Dick?"

"I am not quite sure, father."

"Well, I'll do it over again for you, then."

Accordingly the banker went over the combination again and again. Then Dick tried it successfully, and assured his father that he remembered it.

"All right, then. Well, come in here a little before nine and get the diamonds, and take them to the bank. It is possible that I may be here. If so I can give them to you. Otherwise, you know the combination and can take them yourself."

"Very well, father."

"And, now, lie down on that sofa, and rest yourself till lunch time. You don't look well. I'm afraid that fellow who gave you the crack on the head, hurt you more than we thought. You are as white as a ghost. And yet I suppose if there was a base-ball match this afternoon you would want to go, eh?"

Dick smiled faintly.

"I dare say, father."

"Ah! Well, it is a good thing that there is not a game to-day, so you can just lie still."

Slicker, at the window, listened attentively to the conversation, while a triumphant grin lighted up his countenance.

Suddenly, Mr. Scott who had turned around from the sofa upon which Dick had thrown himself, looked full in the face of Slicker.

The latter was so much astonished that he could only return Mr. Scott's astounded stare, and for perhaps half a minute neither made any movement.

Then the banker walked slowly to his table, his eyes riveted upon those of Slicker, who still hung to the window-sill, supporting himself upon the sloping roof of the kitchen.

Mr. Scott put his hand in a drawer in the table, and withdrawing it with a quick motion, presented a pistol at the evil face at the window and pulled the trigger.

But too late! Slicker divined his intention as his hand stole to the drawer, and ere the shot could be fired, he had ducked his head below the window-sill.

"What is that, father?" cried Dick, springing to his feet in bewilderment.

For answer the banker fired another shot at a large broad-brimmed hat that was just in sight at the window with the effect of the hat disappearing as if some one had pulled the string.

"What is it? What is it?" asked Dick, eagerly.

"Who is it?"

"I don't know what it is now, but I know what it soon will be—a dead rascal," answered the banker,

hotly, as, pistol in hand, he rushed toward the window.

"Stop, father, stop!" implored Dick, as he seized his father by the arm, and held him back.

"Let go of my arm, Dick! Confound it! Do you suppose I will allow a fellow to break into my room before my very eyes?"

He tore himself from his son's grasp, and reached the window just in time to see a burly figure slide all of a heap down the sloping roof and drop to the ground.

"There he goes!" yelled the banker, in a frenzy, as he blazed away again.

But Slicker had reached the fence at the end of the yard by this time, and clearing it at a bound, waved his broad-brimmed hat in defiance at the wrathful banker, and ran around the corner out of sight.

"Well, confound his impudence!" muttered Mr. Scott, as he removed the empty cartridges from his revolver, and carefully filling the three empty chambers, replaced the weapon in the drawer.

CHAPTER XII.

A DOUBLE PLAY.

When the incoming train threatened Dan and Dr. Horne with a death from which there was apparently no escape, the detective, for the first time, felt a tremor that was as near fear as that weakness ever reached him.

As for Dr. Horne, now that he saw certain death, he prepared to meet it as became a man. There was a good deal of solid stuff in the doctor.

Thump! thump! thump! Clang! clang!

Already the locomotive had reached the trestle. The engineer had just caught sight of the two figures on the bridge in the rain and wind, and pushing the lever hard down, reversed his engine and whistled for brakes.

The train on the other track had gathered up in speed, and was running smoothly on, the engineer having no idea of the tragedy about to take place on the track by its side.

Hastily Dan looked through the gloom to where the red light on the last car shone luridly through the rain far away on the bridge.

Thump! thump! thump! Clang! clang!

The locomotive, though its speed was considerably reduced by the efforts of the engineer and brakemen, aided by the air-brake, that was on full strength, was getting very close.

"Only one thing to do!" shouted Dan, into the ear of the doctor.

"What is it?"

"To drop into the river. Better to take our chances of drowning than be crushed to death under the wheels. Follow me!"

Quickly he let himself down between two of the ties, intending to drop into the roaring waters thirty feet below, when to his joy, he found that his feet had found a resting-place just under the ties.

There was no time for talk. The engine was so near that he could feel its hot breath, as the steam hissed from the cylinders on either side. He seized the doctor by the ankles and pulled him down, all in a heap, between the ties.

Hardly had he done so when the heavy train rumbled over their heads, so close that they could have put their hands up and touched the axles as it passed.

Dr. Horne and Dan lay clasped in each other's arms on a support of some kind that waved to and fro under their weight, and that might, for anything they could tell, fall with them into the river at any moment.

What an interminable length the train seemed to be, as it ran along over their heads! They could see the reflection of the light from the windows—for it was a passenger train from New York—striking the wet sides of the freight on the other track, and they even heard the voices of passengers, as the bustle incidental to a journey's end put everybody in the cars on the alert.

With the exception of the engineer and fireman, probably no one in all that long train knew that two human beings had been forced to drop from the trestle to almost certain death on that stormy night within a few feet of hundreds who were unable to give them the slightest assistance.

The little resting-place that Dan and the doctor had so fortunately found was nothing more than a plank that had been hung by chains below by workmen to enable them to repair the trestle, and which they had not taken the trouble to remove on the completion of their task.

No sooner had the train passed than Dan sprang up from the wobbly plank, and holding to the ties, assisted his companion to a solid place of safety.

"Follow me!" said a voice almost in his ear, as he regained the trestle and stretched himself.

The rain had gradually become less violent, and there were general indications that the worst of the storm was over, with perhaps a fine summer day to follow.

Still it was too dark to distinguish anything a few yards away, for the sky was covered with thick, black clouds, and if there were any stars, they were hidden away as effectively as if they had been covered by a pall.

Dan could just see that two men stood on the trestle, and that both, like himself and Dr. Horne, were enveloped in large rubber-coats; but one of them wore a broad-brimmed soft felt hat, that he knew at once was only to be seen upon the head of one man in Albany, that man being Sam Walker, alias Slicker.

"Walk on. We will follow you," answered the detective, briefly, as he took the hand of the doctor, and gave him an admonitory pull.

Not another word was exchanged. Slicker and

his companion—who Dan was satisfied was no other than Barker—marched off the trestle and along the track, not troubling themselves to look back until they reached the spot for which they were bound.

Running down the bank from the track, they motioned to Dan to come down, too.

The four men then found themselves upon a small platform of stone, against which bobbed a good-sized boat, fitted with a mainmast and jibboom, on which the sails were closely furled. A small trap aft showed that there was a cabin, out of which, in fact, the head of a creature who might have been a man, a boy or monkey, emerged, in response to the cry of Slicker of "Swift ahoy!"

"Well, what's the trouble?" growled the inmate of the cabin. "Here's the Swift. What do you want with her?"

"All right, Guy. This is Slicker. Everything clear?"

"I guess so. The decks have been pretty well washed to-night, and I'm darned if I haven't had to open the cabin windows on the lee side to let the water out when the scuppers got clogged up."

"Pretty tough!" said Slicker, in a conciliatory tone.

"Well, I should coil a rope. Come, get aboard, if you're coming!"

Dan managed to nudge the doctor warningly, and the latter, quick to understand, slipped his hand into his outer pocket and clutched his pistol determinedly. Dan did the same, and then, under the direction of Slicker, jumped from the platform to the deck of the boat.

Hardly had they done so, when, as the detective expected, the craft was pushed off from shore toward the center of the river.

"We'd better go below," said Slicker, as he pointed to the hatchway.

Dan, though suspicious of the other's intentions, did not think it wise to decline; so, only keeping a sharp eye on the movements of the men who were virtually their captors, he descended a steep ladder running down between two lockers, and found himself in a stuffy little hole with room or lockers for half a dozen men, and a small table in the center, the whole feebly illuminated by the rays of a smoky coal-oil lamp.

In a few moments, Slicker, Barker, Dr. Horne and the detective were seated around the table looking into each other's faces, like contending armies ready for attack or defense, waiting for some one to open the conversation.

The man they had called Guy (for he was a man after all), remained on deck, though within call if he should be wanted.

"Well, Mr. Straight Tip," began the doctor.

"By the way, which of you is Straight Tip?"

"Both of us," returned Slicker, with a grin.

"Ahl! Well, you told me in your letter that you could help me to get back a sum of money that was stolen from my desk this morning."

"Did we?" asked Slicker, innocently.

"Why, confound you! Didn't you?" broke out the doctor wrathfully.

"You say so."

"I say so? Well, of all the— Why, hang me if I don't make you—"

His right hand, which had never left his pocket, wriggled about ominously; but Dan, who sat by his side, gave him a warning touch on the arm, and brought him to himself.

"Now, see here, old gentleman," interposed Barker, who had not spoken before, "you are not in your own house in Albany now, with lackeys at your bidding. You are on board the yacht 'Swift,' which changes her name for every cruise, and which belongs to a set of men who wouldn't think any more of carrying out your dead body to Sandy Hook and throwing it overboard, than they would of killing a pup."

"The bloodthirsty rascal!" muttered the doctor, inaudibly.

"So, all you have to do in this case is to say nothing until you are told to speak, and when that time comes you want to speak quickly and straight to the point. Now, Slicker, go on with your business."

Barker concluded his harangue with an air of modest self-satisfaction, and producing a long, sharp dagger, stuck it into the table before him with so much force that it quivered again.

Double-Curve Dan did not interfere in this controversy. He looked upon it only as a detail, that would have no effect upon the main issue, and was therefore of no particular importance. Besides, Dr. Horne was quite able to take care of himself under ordinary circumstances.

"Now, Doctor Horne, you want ter get back yer money, I suppose?" asked Slicker slowly.

"That's a fool question, and I should be an ass to answer it seriously," replied the doctor gruffly.

"Wal, that's no matter. In course yer wants yer money. Wal, ef yer do ez yer told, yer kin git it."

"Is it here?"

"No, it isn't hyar. I an' my friend ain't no thieves. We are respectable gentlemen, with er taste fer base-ball, an' with several speculations on hand, like any other syndicate."

"Oh!"

"Now, hyar's ther proposition. You sign er certain paper and give it ter me, an' the person ez takes it will return yer money to your house when he hands in ther paper."

"What is this precious paper?"

"Only an order to your daughter, Clara Horne, ter give ther bearer a check for \$500, drawn ter ther order of William Williamson and signed Richard Scott, Sr., and which you have somewhere in your house."

"Why, the man's an idiot," howled the doctor.

"Yes, it does seem like it, doesn't it? But yer see I hev er use fer thet partic'lar check, an' I want it. An' I'm ready ter tell yer whar you kin git back all ther money ez wuz taken outer yer drawer yesterday ef you'll jest sign thet paper."

Double-Curve Dan did not speak, but was thinking busily. He began to see the game of the virtuous Slicker. As to why his own presence had been desired here to-night, he suspected that Slicker had an idea that he (Dan) had the diamonds still secreted about his person. The reader knows that if Slicker had supposed so when he threw the note through the doctor's window, he knew better now.

Dr. Horne was boiling with indignation.

"Why, you miserable rascals—"

"Here, quit that!" commanded Barker, putting his hand on the hilt of his dagger. "When you are the guests of gentlemen you must not insult them in their own—I mean, on board of their own vessel."

Dan Manly's lip curled slightly, but still he did not speak.

"And do you suppose that I am going to give you another \$500 when I do not know whether I will get back the \$50,000?"

"You won't be giving any \$500. It ain't likely ez you've indorsed ther check, an' until you do write yer name on ther back uv it, no one kin git any money on it. But don't you fear! I ain't goin' ter git thet check cashed. I kin use it better than thet."

Dr. Horne was mystified. He could not see through the game at all.

"P'raps you wan to get Mr. Scott's signature so that you can copy it. Perhaps forgery is the little performance you desire to try."

"Never mind what we want ter try. Thet ain't any uv your bizness. But I'll tell yer, ef it's any satisfaction, thet we don't want ter commit forgery, but—just the opposite."

"Oho!" thought Dan Manly. "It is what I suspected."

"And if I refuse to treat with you at all, what then?" asked the doctor.

Slicker's brow grew black.

"Hullo, Guy!" he cried.

"Ay, ay!" came gruffly from above.

"How long would it take you to run us down to the city—New York, I mean."

"If this wind was to hold out, I could put you there by the afternoon—to-morrow night, anyhow."

"All right."

The doctor did not understand this, until Slicker continued:

"By to-morrow night, if you don't come to terms there will be a case of mysterious disappearance uv er prominent medical man uv Albany. That's all."

"No occasion for that," said Dan, taking part in the conference for the first time. "Dr. Horne will give you the paper."

"Why—I—" remonstrated the doctor, but a nudge from Dan silenced him. Dr. Horne had considerable respect for the astuteness of the young detective.

"Thet's right. Dan, you are ez smart in bizness ez you are in the pitcher's box," remarked Slicker.

"Or in a bedroom at the American Hotel at three in the morning," added the detective, with a light laugh.

Barker scowled. He had neither forgotten nor forgiven the way Dan Manly had fooled him and Slicker, making them hold up their hands just when they thought they had secured the diamonds. Besides, Barker's eye still showed the marks of Norah O'Connor's fist a punishment for which he felt sure that he was indebted to Double-Curve Dan.

Slicker meanwhile had produced a sheet of letter paper, with pen and ink from a small locker over his head, and laid them before the doctor.

"You say I am to get my \$50,000 back when this check is delivered to bearer—whoever he may be?" asked the doctor.

"Yes; ther bearer will be my friend hyar, Mr. Smith," pointing to Barker, "and he will have the money with him."

"Fifty thousand dollars?"

"No, \$30,000. We must hev something fer all our trouble, yer know."

"Why, you are not even willing to keep to your own miserable bargain. You said you would return the money you took."

"Not much I didn't. In ther first place, ez I told you afore, me and my friend hyar ain't no thieves an' we didn't take yer money. If we git this check it is fer some one else, who will give us \$30,000 fer it. Wal, we're willin' ter let you hev \$20,000 of it leaving only \$10,000 fer ourselves. It ain't very squar' on us, but we ain't goin' ter kick over a thousand dollars."

Another nudge from Double-Curve Dan, and the doctor, without replying, took the sheet of paper, and began to write.

CHAPTER XIII. THE PITCHER'S BOX.

Slicker leaned across the table and watched the doctor's pen as it ran easily over the paper. He saw that it was dated July 23, and that it was directed to "Dear Clara." Then he sat back on his locker, with his back against the side of the cabin, and appeared to be wrapped in thought.

In a few minutes the note was written and Dr. Horne read it aloud:

"DEAR CLARA:—In the secret drawer you will find a check for \$500, signed by Richard Scott, Sr. It is the one you put away for me a week or so ago. Give it to bearer as soon as he has placed in your hands the sum of \$20,000."

"JABEZ HORNE."

"You had better tell her yer won't be home until to-morrer night," observed Slicker, carelessly.

Again the doctor tossed his head impatiently, and was about to make a hot reply, when a nudge from the watchful detective made him change his mind.

He wrote as a postscript: "I shall not be home until to-morrow night," finishing with a "J. R." of which the last letter ended with a peculiar twist at the end.

"That's er funny 'R' you've made thar, doctor," observed Slicker, as he waved the paper about to dry the ink, and then, folding it, put it in his pocket.

"Yes, I often make it in that way. But now, when is this note to be delivered?"

"To-morrow some time."

"You said something in your letter about a black sachel?" said the doctor.

For answer, Slicker brought from the locker upon which he and Barker sat, a sachel that Dan at once recognized as his own.

"I don't see why you should produce that as evidence that you tried to rob me of \$10,000 worth of jewels," observed Dan, quietly.

"Don't yer? Wal, let me show yer something."

Slicker pressed a little brass button that was concealed in the bottom of the inside of the sachel, and disclosed a small compartment that opened in obedience to the pressure on the button. From this compartment he took forth a paper which he spread out on the table.

"What's that?" asked Dan, scornfully.

"Something ez wuz accidentally found in this hyar sachel ez belongs to you, an' that I'm goin' ter return ter yer under sart'n conditions."

"I never saw the paper before. This is some stupid trick that you have conceived, and that you haven't brains enough to carry out," said Dan.

"Is thet so? Wal, we'll see. Wait till I read this."

Slicker read the contents of the paper, which were to the effect that the writer, Dan Manly, known as Double-Curve Dan, agreed in consideration of a certain sum, to be paid by one whom Slicker did not name—to win the match game of base-ball between the Diamond Stars, of New York, and the Albany Club, for the latter organization, by fair means or foul, and especially to balk, hold the ball in unfair positions before delivery and to exercise his ability in pitching a double-curve ball (which it was contended by some people was in itself unfair), for the defeat of the Diamond Stars and the success of the Albanys. He also agreed to try and get the umpire to enter into collusion with him for the same end.

All this Slicker read with due emphasis, falling over hard words occasionally, and pronouncing them in a fearful and wonderful way, but making the purport of the paper unmistakable to his three listeners.

"Thar, Dan, what d'ye say to that?" he asked, as he concluded the paper, and held it tightly in his hand.

"Why, it is all a lie, of course. You have put that paper in the sachel, and now, for some purpose of your own, you are trying to injure my character. It is a very ridiculous attempt, as you would know if you were not such a blockhead."

"Keep cool!" whispered the doctor, who was delighted at the opportunity to retaliate on the detective for his many warnings to him to the same effect.

The doctor's words brought Dan to himself on the instant.

"Go on and unfold your scheme," he said, carelessly. "You have read that paper for some purpose, I suppose?"

"Wal, rather."

"Yer talk too much," interrupted Barker, irritably. "Tell the kid what you want and get through with it. If I was managing this affair, I'd settle it in a minute, or—"

He touched the handle of his knife, and again set it quivering in the table.

"Who is the man with whom I am supposed to have made this contract?" asked Dan.

Slicker leaned across the table and whispered in his ear.

"Why, that is absurd. You know better than that."

Slicker again leaned across and whispered for perhaps half a minute to the detective.

Dan looked stressed. The communication, whatever it was, seemed to affect him more than anything else that had happened since they had been in the cabin of the Swift.

"Those are the conditions ch?" he asked, with his eyes bent on the table.

"Them air ther conditions!" answered Slicker.

"What do you say to them?"

"Give me a minute's time."

"I'll give you ten minutes."

"Durned if I would," grumbled Barker. "You have the game in your own hands Slicker. Why don't you make him dance to your music?"

"When I want your advice, Smith, I'll ask for it. Ther captain put you under my orders, didn't he?"

"Yes, but not for your private business," retorted the other, playing with the handle of his knife as it stuck in the table, and making it shiver wickedly.

"It ain't fer you to decide what's my bizness or your bizness. You only hev ter doez I tell yer!"

"What's that?"

The question, in savage tones, was accompanied by a flourish of the knife, which he drew from the table with an earnestness that threatened trouble.

Dr. Horne and the detective looked pleased at the prospect of a quarrel. The same idea struck them both; namely, that if the miscreants were to kill each

other, perhaps the stolen money might be found on board the Swift, and all the complications be ended at a stroke.

But Slicker was too astute a rascal to be caught that way. He divined what was passing in the minds of the two and he hastened to mollify his quick-tempered partner.

"Oh, I wuz only jokin', Smith. Put yer knife down, and don't get mad."

"I ain't always in the humor to take jokes," was the surly reply. "I wouldn't get off any more of them if I were you."

This quieted down the threatened rupture, and Slicker sat quietly waiting for the detective to speak.

"I don't see what I can do but accept your proposition," said Dan, at last.

"Good!"

"Now, what is the next thing?" asked the detective.

"Wal, we shall hev ter keep you an' ther doctor aboard ther Swift for a while until we hev fixed matters outside. We ain't afraid ez you'd try any monkey bizness, but we must be on ther safe side, don't yer see?"

"I don't see," remarked the doctor. "But go on."

"We hev ter send er messenger ter your house fer ther check."

"Yes."

"An' then, Dan, we must send your note to Mr. Scott, Senior, an' git an answer."

"I see."

It is unnecessary here to enlighten the reader as to the nature of the bargain made between Double-Curve Dan and Slicker Walker in the short whispered communication across the table, and that is of course as mysterious to every one else as it was to Dr. Horne.

Slicker's scheme was to get the check, to which Dick had, in an evil moment, signed his father's name, into his own possession—by what means, we have seen. Then he meant that Dan Manly should write to Mr. Scott, Sr., telling him that a forged check by his son was in the hands of certain persons from whom it could be obtained on payment of \$1,000. Otherwise it would be presented at the bank upon which it was drawn, for payment. Then would follow the exposure and imprisonment of his son. Slicker knew that Dan Manly's communication would be repeated by the banker, and that the plot, with his aid, would more than likely be crowned with success. If Dan did not consent to the arrangement, then Slicker, knowing that it would be impossible for him to make a bargain with the banker, would publish Dick's crime to the world and ruin him absolutely. In addition to this he would (but this did not affect the detective particularly) make public the communication he pretended to have found in the black sachel, showing that Dan had caused the Albanys to win the match with the Diamond Stars by foul means. Dan was well known in New York, and such a story told in that city, might injure him deeply, though Dan did not think it would.

What was Dan to do? He could not let Dick go to ruin for the sake of \$1,000, much as he disliked to contribute to the rapacity of Slicker and his crew, and he could see no other alternative but to accede to the villain's demand, trusting to his own vigilance to bring him to justice eventually.

"When am I to have that paper?" he asked.

"Ez soon ez you hev written the letter. I'll tend ter ther rest."

"Give me the writing materials."

Double-Curve Dan was a rapid and expert penman. In a few minutes he had indited a short, business-like note to the banker, signed and dated, and taking an envelope from a heap of several thrown upon the table by Slicker, wrote the superscription, and held the note and envelope in his hands while he waited for the forged note that Slicker retained, and which he pretended to have found in the sachel. Dan did not care very much about this note, because he argued that the hand which had prepared it could easily write another if it was wanted. But he wanted to see whether Slicker meant to act honorably in this simple matter.

Slicker settled this question by giving the letter to the detective ere the latter handed him the one he had written.

The exchange effected, Dan took a match from his pocket and burned the note from the sachel, while Slicker carefully read the note to Mr. Scott, Sr., and saw that it contained the matter given above. Then he put it in an inner pocket with a grin of satisfaction.

"That's all right. Now, gen'lemen, we'll hev ter let yer stay down byer by yerselves fer awhile. We'll leave ther lamp burning, an' ez long ez yer keep quiet, why, yer won't be hurt. But we'll be within easy reach if thar is any sign ov mutiny."

Slicker said all this in an easy conversational tone, as if he were merely offering the hospitality of his home to two honored guests.

The man they called Guy had come quietly down the companionway during the preceding conversation, and Dan and the doctor were both somewhat taken aback to notice, not only that he held a double-action six-shooter pointed at Dan's head, but that two other pistols held by an Italian of villainous aspect were threatening the brains of Dr. Horne.

Slicker had drawn a pistol while talking, and suddenly, in a loud voice, commanded both the prisoners, as they might now be called, to throw up their hands.

There was no choice. Though, as we know, both the detective and the doctor had pistols in the outer pockets of their waterproofs, neither dared touch them. There was desperation in all four of

the faces around them, and any attempt to draw their own weapons would have been the signal for a volley that would have laid them low at once, with but little likelihood of the murderers ever being brought to justice.

"Put up your hands!" reiterated Barker.

Rather slowly, and with a look of intense disgust, the doctor raised his hands above his head, Dan accepting his humiliation with much better grace, but with even more inward rebellion than his companion.

"Keep your weapons ready," directed Slicker, with a casual glance at Guy and the dark visaged Italian.

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Guy. "But we're running up and down the river, according to your orders, and I ought to be at the helm unless we want to run into the rocks on one side of the river or the other."

"Just one minute, an' we'll be through," was Slicker's response, as he deftly relieved Dan and Doctor Horne of their pistols, and examined their clothing for other weapons.

A billy and a bowie-knife were taken from Dan, besides his revolver, but the doctor's pistol was the only murderous implement that that worthy gentleman possessed. Slicker did not search them for any other property, rather to Dan's surprise, for he expected that there would be a hunt through his apparel for the diamonds. He did not know that Slicker was as well-informed as to the hiding-place of the diamonds, in the banker's library, as he was.

"That's all right," observed Slicker, at last, as he handed the doctor's revolver to Barker and kept Dan's for himself. "Guy, you and Juan kin go on deck again. I've pulled ther teeth uv these two gentlemen, an' they can't hurt nobody now."

"We'll, then let's get out and leave them here," put in Barker, gruffly, "if you have done talking."

Slicker took the hint good-humoredly enough. He had got all he wanted from the prisoners and could afford to laugh at his partner's ill-temper.

"Doctor, you and Mr. Manly kin open out them thar lockers, an' you'll find 'em quite comfortable. You'd better take er sleep, 'cause you won't be goin' off uv ther Swift fer er good many hours."

Barker was already half-way up the companion-ladder, and Slicker followed, looking around to say:

"I guess yer can't git out uv them windows, or I'd close ther dead-lights. Ez it is yer kin look at ther view on ther river when it gits light enough. Good-night."

He ran quickly up the few remaining steps, and shut the hatchway with a bang, bolting it on the outside. Then the doctor and detective looked around their little prison by the feeble light of the smoky coal-oil lamp.

CHAPTER XIV.

A FUMBLING GROUND.

"WELL, this is a nice predicament!" grunted the doctor, as soon as he found himself alone with the detective.

"It is, but it might be worse."

"But to be cooped up in this little cubby-hole, with those rascally fellows at the top of the stairs, is hard, indeed," continued Dr. Horne, lashing himself into a rage.

While the doctor was raging about Barker, Dan looked around to see what sort of a place they were in.

He agreed with the opinion of Slicker that the best thing for him and Dr. Horne to do would be to get a few hours' rest if possible.

"Look at this, doctor," he exclaimed, as he seized a loop of rope tucked behind a cushion that lay upon the top of one of the lockers.

"What is it?"

Dan pulled the rope, and showed that it was a sort of handle to the lid of the locker, drawing it up and over, and revealing a very comfortable bunk, for which the top cushion made a mattress. The other locker worked in the same way, and in five minutes the detective, who was as handy at making a bed as pitching a base-ball, had two beds ready that looked most inviting to men who had passed through such a miserable two or three hours as the doctor and himself.

"There is nothing else for it, I suppose," grumbled the doctor, stretching and yawning. "But I should like to thrash that fellow with the big knife before I go to sleep. The idea of an American citizen—Dr. Horne—being compelled to koo-too to a fellow like that. It makes me downright sick. I must have a smoke before I go to bed."

"Don't set the boat on fire. We should be burned up in this cabin like rats in a trap!" warned Dan.

"If it wasn't for that I believe I would put a light to it," observed the doctor, as he sat on the edge of the bunk he intended to occupy, and lighted a cigar that he took from a well-filled cigar-case.

He offered one to Dan, but the detective declined.

The doctor lay down in his bunk, becoming more soothed every instant under the influence of his good cigar, and Dan, turning out the lamp, which did not improve the atmosphere of the little cabin, threw himself on the other mattress and listened, in a state of dreamy content, to the soft lap-lapping of the waters against the hull of the boat—for the storm had passed entirely away, and it was now as calm as it had before been tempestuous, until he dropped into a sound sleep.

He had slumbered for about two hours, and the first streaks of dawn could have been seen over the horizon if he had been outside, when a slight tapping caused him to become broad awake, and with all his wits about him on the instant.

He sat up and listened.

All was still, save the measured breathing of the doctor, and the decided swish of water, indicating that the Swift was moving under the influence of the fair breeze that whistled musically through the trees on the river shore.

It was quite dark in the little cabin, and the detective tried in vain to distinguish his surroundings. The grating in the hatch overhead was closed, and if there was anybody on deck he managed to keep so quiet that no indication of his presence could be made out by those in the cabin.

"Guess I'll let the doctor sleep for the present," he muttered. "No use waking him up until there is something for him to do."

Another gentle tapping.

"Ah! I thought I was not mistaken."

The detective produced his small lantern, which was still in his pocket, and which he lighted with a safety match that he always carried.

Then he walked straight to the door at the end of the little cabin and listened.

Tap, tap, tap!

He hesitated no longer. Folded up in his small penknife, which Slicker had not regarded as a weapon, was a steel implement like a bent skewer. Dan thrust this into the key-hole, gave it one twist, and the door was open.

In a second a man slipped through the opening and grasped him by the hand.

"I am!"

"Dick!"

"All well, Dan?"

"All well. Just come aboard?"

"About half an hour ago."

"See anything of the honest Slicker and his courtly friend Barker?"

"Both on deck. I watched them from the shore by the faint light that came from the East. It is morning now, you know, Dan. I could just make out the figures of four men in the bow, and then I saw three of them lie down on a pile of sails, for a rest, I suppose, leaving one fellow on watch. You see, they were anchored about mid-stream then, and the man on watch had nothing particular to do but to look about him."

"Yes."

"I was afraid he might see me putting off from shore in my skiff. But I had to take my chances. You told me to keep watch on you and the doctor, and I have done it all night. I lost you at first, in all that storm. I dared not keep too near to you, because you did not want the doctor to see me. Well, I hid myself in a little recess in the rocks at the side of the track, to keep out of the storm and to try and get my ideas together. You know what a fearful, dark night it has been. I had given up all hope of seeing you again, though I made up my mind to stay in the vicinity all night if I did not find you. All at once I saw four men walking down the track. They passed very close to me, and I distinguished the figures of you, Doctor Horne and Slicker."

"And Barker," added Dan.

"I don't know him, but of course the fourth man was he. I saw you all get aboard the Swift, and then she sailed out into the river and dodged about as if the great sea-serpent was at her heels. I could hardly follow her, but I had seen the craft before and knew her as the property of a secret society in New York to which Slicker belongs. In Albany she is supposed to be owned by a rich New Yorker, who leaves her most of the time in charge of his captain, Guy Bingham. I knew that she would meet likely sail up and down here, so I got a small skiff that I always keep just above this spot in the Albany Club boat-house, and determined to row up to the Swift and board her, according to your directions. Though how you knew that they would bring you to her is more than I can guess."

"I did not know," answered Dan, coolly, "but I would have wagered a thousand dollars upon it. I have been aboard this boat before, and I know every inch of her. But Slicker is not aware of that fact. I do not allow gentlemen in Slicker's profession to be better informed on my proceedings than I can help. I felt certain they would get me here to talk about the black sachel and I was quite willing that they should, because I intended to bring the career of Messrs. Slicker and Barker to a close for a few years if possible, and I want a good, clear case against them."

"Dan, you're a magician."

"No, I am a member of the New York Secret Service. That's all."

The day was fast breaking now, and a gray light began to steal through the cabin windows. Dr. Horne was lying on his back, snoring as comfortably as if he were in his own luxurious bedroom. Though a rich man, he cared but little for creature comforts, and was as satisfied to take a nap on a heap of straw as upon a bed of down. He had accumulated money because he could not help it, and because he considered it a matter of honor to be paid on a scale commensurate with the services he was able to render. Though modest in most things, Dr. Horne knew his ability as a physician, and he was uncompromisingly jealous of his reputation in this regard.

Dan touched him on the shoulder. He moved uneasily and growled: "I can't get up. I have been up several nights now. If it isn't very serious, go to Doctor Salmon. He's a young man and a clever physician. I endorse him, but—"

Dan laughed softly, and the doctor awoke and looked at him through the misty atmosphere of the gray dawn.

"Oh, Dan, that you? It isn't often I sleep so soundly. But I thought it was a night-call, and I wanted to get out of it, if possible."

"Well, this is an early morning call, doctor, and I

am afraid you will have to attend to it yourself. Doctor Salmon will hardly do in this case," answered the detective, with a smile.

The doctor was standing up now, and Dan, with a whispered caution to be very quiet, signed to his two companions to follow him, as he opened the door at the end of the cabin, and, lantern in hand, plunged into the darkness beyond.

It was a sort of store-room, running half the length of the forward deck. Dan cast his lantern hither and thither until it rested upon a tall locker on the right. This he opened with his serviceable steel wire, and showed two shot-guns, a number of revolvers, knives and four navy cutlasses.

Dan appropriated two of the revolvers without hesitation and filled them with cartridges from a tin box on a shelf, which he seemed to know just where to find. One pistol he gave to Dr. Horne; the other he kept for himself. Dick had one of his own, which, indeed, he had carried, openly, in his hand since he first appeared in the cabin.

"Where is the skiff, Dick?"

"It is right under the bow of the Swift, hitched to one of the safety-lines. If I had let it tow along from the stern it would be seen sure."

"All right. Now, careful!" warned the detective, as he picked his way among coils of rope, bundles of sails and other rubbish.

A glimmer of light revealed itself, as he mounted a steep ladder and pushed up a hatch. He looked through the chink cautiously, and then opening the hatch wider, stole through, and beckoned to his companions to follow.

"Lay low!" he whispered.

All three dropped behind a heap of sails, while the detective reconnoitered. Then he put his finger to his lip, as he saw that there was work to be done at once.

Lying within a few feet of the hatchway, with a sail over them, were Slicker, Barker and the Italian all fast asleep. They were so near that Dan could have touched them. At the other end of the boat, with his hand on the tiller, was Guy Bingham. He had run the boat inshore to the spot where Dr. Horne and Dan had boarded it the night before, and was preparing to move the boat to a large stump that grew half in the water.

Dan saw that it would require careful management to avoid attracting Guy's attention too soon. Slowly and cautiously he crawled forward, with Dick and the doctor by his side.

He whispered in the ear of each, and then, without a word of warning, they sprung upon the three sleepers. Dan took Slicker; Dr. Horne, at his particular request, Barker, and Dick the Italian.

Each took his man by the throat, and kneeling on his chest, presented the muzzle of a revolver at his head and whispered:

"Silence!"

The way the three desperadoes took their discomfiture was characteristic. The Italian only grunted and lay still. For one thing, he knew that there was nothing against him now, though in former years he had expiated crime with imprisonment, and, in fact, had been released from Sing Sing only two weeks before.

Barker turned fiercely upon the doctor, and knocking the revolver from his hand, wrestled with him and gave every reason to suppose that he would overpower him.

As for Slicker, he attempted to temporize. He looked at Dan and the revolver, and observed coolly: "Wal, Dan, you seem ter hev the best uv it. What's ther game?"

"Where is that money? You have it, I know. Tell me right now, or I'll blow your brains out, as I have a right to do when I catch a man of your kind red-handed in villainy and attempted murder."

In the excitement of the moment, Double-Curve Dan did not notice that Guy Bingham was coming rapidly toward him with an iron stanchion in his hand.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION—DAN SCORES 7 TO 2.

Dick, always a handy fellow, seized some half-inch rope that was lying conveniently near, and had the Italian tied up like an Egyptian mummy in two minutes. Dick had taken a great interest in the rope-untying-feats of Spiritualistic mediums, and had more than once acted as one of a committee to bind the gentleman who sits in a cabinet and unties himself as soon as the curtains are drawn.

The doctor and Barker were having it hot and heavy, until the latter, with the advantages of youth and superior strength on his side, turned his antagonist upon his back, and, pistol in hand, threatened him with the butt-end.

At this moment Guy reached the spot, and, raising the stanchion, prepared to deal the detective a terrible blow on the back of the head.

He would undoubtedly have carried out his kindly purpose had not a ponderous fist reached the side of his face first and sent him sprawling headlong to the deck. Barney Muggins, closely followed by Richard Scott, Sr., stood over him, and taking in the general situation at a glance, threw himself upon Barker.

There was a struggle for a moment, but the attacking party were in the ascendant now, and Barker, Slicker and Guy were soon lying as helpless as the Italian himself.

"Good heavens! Who is that on shore?" exclaimed Dick, as he hurried to that part of the boat nearest to the landing.

"Oh, she insisted upon coming. She came around to the house, and Norah, who, it seems, knew all about this escapade of yours, told me where we could find you. I am glad we came."

But Dick did not wait to hear the end of his

father's remarks. He had dashed over the side of the boat, and was leading Clara Horne up the gang-plank. In another minute she was clasped in her father's arms, while Norah looked benignly on and evidently enjoyed the whole situation to the utmost.

"Slicker," whispered Dan, bending down to speak in the other's ear. "You had better tell me where to find that money. It may make it easier for you."

"Curse you!" was Slicker's savage reply. He lost his usual self-control under the weight of his defeat.

"Don't talk like that. It will do you no good. I am not the man to taunt even a crook when he is down," said the detective. "But I know that you have that money of Doctor Horne's somewhere on this boat."

"Well, if it is, it can stay there."

"You won't tell me where to find it, then?"

"No! Curse you! No!"

"Then, I shall have to search for it myself. I have a pretty good idea where it is, but I wanted to give you a chance."

"If you know all about it, you need not give me any chance," was the defiant rejoinder.

"I have a certain bottle and a tin bucket, each containing laudanum. Do you know how the State of New York deals with poisoners?" asked the detective, significantly.

The other became livid.

"What do I care for poisoners?" he stammered.

"I have witnesses to prove that you tried to administer poison, in a deadly quantity, to one Daniel Manly, of New York, known as Double-Curve Dan, and that it was only by the greatest efforts on the part of Doctor Horne, a prominent physician of Albany, that his life was saved."

Slicker trembled, in spite of the ropes that bound him.

"Your burglary of Doctor Horne's house, with the theft of \$50,000, and your attempted robbery of Daniel Manly in the American Hotel, which you perhaps think is not known to me, will be sufficient to give you a long term in State Prison, and—"

"Yes, well! Say anything about that hotel business, and where will be your friend, Dick, eh? I have sworn to ruin that fellow for going back on me, and I'll do it."

The ruffian's teeth ground as he said this, and the detective winced. He must save Dick at any cost.

"He putta the mona in the coila ropa by thata hatchway," said the Italian, who had not spoken before, but who seemed to have been laboring under some mental excitement during the conversation of Dan and the Slicker, which, commenced in whispers, had gradually reached loud tones.

Slicker tried to burst his bonds at this revelation by the Italian, and it would doubtless have gone hard with the latter, and he succeeded in getting the ropes from his arms and ankles. As it was, there was no harm done, and the Italian grinned at Slicker's impotent struggles.

Dr. Horne searched in the coil of rope referred to by the Italian, and, sure enough, there were his bonds, bills and specie, bundled up in a canvas bag, and thrust to the bottom of the coil inside, and covered with loose rope.

"Hurrah!" shouted the doctor, delightedly.

"I must congratulate you, doctor," said the detective.

"I must congratulate you, you mean. Why, I would never have got this money back but for you. Dan, you are the smartest fellow I have met in the whole course of my professional existence, and I will go on the witness stand when that rascal is in court on a charge of poisoning, and prove him guilty by every test known to medical science. A fellow that would debase the national game by introducing such diabolical methods is too bad even for hanging."

The doctor was an enthusiast on base-ball, as we have before seen, and the thought of Slicker's attempt on Dan's life in the ball-field, always made him forget everything else, temporarily, at least.

"Look out!" suddenly yelled Barney Muggins, who was some yards from the doctor.

Dr. Horne turned quickly, just in time to stop a blow of Barker's fist aimed at his forehead.

Dr. Horne had been an able scientific boxer all his life, and when he saw his old antagonist, with his hands up in pugilistic fashion, he met him in the same attitude, while a stern smile of satisfaction at the prospect of a test of skill, illumined his features.

Barker had not been tied securely, and while attention had been diverted from him, he had managed to slip out of the ropes, and fly at the doctor. He was a true desperado, and cared nothing for consequences if he could only satisfy his desire for revenge.

Dr. Horne and he had been natural enemies from the first, and his one desire was to annihilate the doctor, before the prison doors closed upon him.

"Father!" cried Clara, clasping her hands in terror.

"Keep still, Clara! Don't bother me!" responded the doctor, impatiently, as he sparred for an opening.

"Faix, Miss Clara, don't ye disturb yer papa. He'll clane cut that sbpalpeen in a twink, now," put in Norah, as her eyes glistened. She had given Barker a taste of her own fist, and she longed to see him get another black eye.

By common consent, the others refrained from interfering. Slicker, Guy, and the Italian could not have done so had they wished, and the rest were too confident of Dr. Horne's ability to overcome his opponent in a pugilistic encounter to desire to stop the fun.

For half a minute Barker and the doctor walked

cautiously around each other, looking for an opening.

Each maintained a good scientific attitude, with his eyes fixed on those of his adversary.

At last Barker made a feint at the doctor's eye with his right hand, and then swung his left for the chin. But his adversary was too quick for him. He stopped the blow neatly, and responded with one on the forehead that raised a bump, and staggered the redoubtable Barker.

"Hurroo! More power to the knoockles of yez. Give him anither of the same!" shrieked Norah, rubbing her hands in satisfaction.

But Barker was up to the line of battle again directly, and managed to give the doctor two tremendous blows on the lower part of the chest, that made the recipient puff again.

Clara could hardly restrain herself from running forward to her father's assistance, but that hero did not require any help. He recovered himself quickly, and rushing with a determination to win or die, he broke through his opponent's guard, and planted his fist squarely, and with all his force, in Barker's mouth.

Pugilists say that a well-delivered blow in the mouth is more effective than on any other part of the face or body. It seemed so in this case, for Barker went down like a log, dazed and beaten completely.

Dr. Horne walked over to him, and satisfied himself that the damage was only of a temporary nature. Then, as he shook hands with Dan, he remarked:

"I thought it strange if my training in the gymnasium at Harvard in the old days had all been forgotten. I used to be considered pretty handy with the gloves a few years ago."

"I guess Barker thinks you are pretty handy now," laughed the detective.

"Mr. Scott," called Slicker, when Barker had been brought to with a drink of water and secured again with a rope, a little more carefully this time.

"What do you want?" demanded Dan.

"None of your business. I am asking for Mr. Scott, the father, I mean—"

"Here I am. What have you to say to me?"

"This! You see that young man over there, standing by ther side uv er girl ez he wants ter marry. He's your son, isn't he? Yes. And he is supposed ter be a nice respectable fell w, who wouldn't do nothing wrong, ain't he? Yes. An' ther girl ez he's ter marry is ther darter uv your old friend, Doctor Horne? Yes. Wal, do yer want ter know what that precious son uv yours is, eh?"

All the vindictive hatred of a mean nature thrilled in the words of the now desperate wretch.

Dan stepped forward and raised his hand as if he would have beaten out the life of the man who was so determined to ruin poor Dick, if he could.

"That's right. Hit er man ez is tied hand and foot. It's a nice sort uv thing ter do!" sneered Slicker. Dan drew back.

"What is it you mean?" asked Mr. Scott.

"What do I mean? Why, that Dick Cooper—your son, is—is—"

"Ah! Just what I expected," remarked Dr. Horne, cheerfully. "Apoplexy! I was looking for it. I have seen those symptoms before often when people have been laboring under strong excitement. He didn't give very much warning, or I would have tried to help him. Don't suppose it would have done any good, though."

While speaking he had loosened the ropes that bound Slicker, and had raised his head, and put some loose rope under it.

Slicker had been smitten with the dread disease just when about to say the words that might have ruined two lives at least. There was no mistake about the nature of the ailment that had visited him. All recognized it.

Under Dr. Horne's directions everybody except the prisoners were pressed into the service of the patient. But the swollen face and stertorous breathing remained for half an hour, and then the spirit fled.

Slicker Walker's vow of hate against Dick Scott died with him.

By the activity of Double-Curve Dan, who secured the papers he and the doctor had been forced to sign, the indiscretions of Dick were never revealed to his proud father. The day after the death of Slicker Walker, Double Curve Dan had a long private interview with Dr. Horne, in the course of which he told how Dick had been led astray by evil counselors and had been persuaded to forge his father's name to a check for \$500. The doctor fumed and raged for a few moments. But Dan did not mind that; he knew that it would end all right. Sure enough it did, and before Dan left the laboratory, the check had been burned, and Dr. Horne was thereby the loser of \$500.

Neither Double-Curve Dan nor Dr. Horne ever had cause to regret their charity to Dick. The latter is now the husband of Clara. He is a member of his father's banking firm, and in fact is the most responsible person connected with it, notwithstanding his youth. Norah lives with the Scotts in the family mansion, but expects soon to be married to her lover in Ireland, who will come for her.

Barker was arrested and put on trial for burglary. His previous character went against him and he was sent to Sing Sing for ten years. Guy and the Italian were not held. They went to New York with their boat, the name of which was changed before she had got very far down the Hudson.

Double-Curve Dan went back to New York to attend to his duties as a member of the Secret Service, but he is still always ready to pitch a game for the Albany Base-Ball Club.

THE END.

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Doing Good and Saying Bad. For several characters.
The Golden Rule. For two males and two females.
The Gift of the Fairy Queen. For several females.
Taken in and Done for. For two characters.
Country Aunt's Visit to the City. Several characters.
The Two Romans. For two males.
Trying the Characters. For three males.
The Happy Family. For several "animals."
The Rainbow. For several characters.
How to write "Popular" Stories. For two males.
The New and the Old. For two males.
A Sensation at Last. For two males.
The Greenhorn. For two males.
The Three Men of Science. For four males.
The Old Lady's Will. For four males.
The Little Philosophers. For two little girls.
How to Find an Heir. For five males.
The Virtues. For six young ladies.
A Connubial Eclogue.
The Public Meeting. For five males and one female.
The English Traveler. For two males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 3.

The May Queen. For an entire school.
Dress Reform Convention. For ten females.
Keeping Bad Company. A Farce. For five males.
Courtship Under Difficulties. Two males, one female.
National Representatives. A Burlesque. Four males.
Escaping the Draft. For numerous males.
The Gentle Cook. For two males.
Masterpiece. For two males and two females.
The Two Romans. For two males.
The Same. Second Scene. For two males.
Showing the White Feather. Four males, one female.
The Battle Call. A Recitative. For one male.

Dime Dialogues, No. 4.

The Frost King. For ten or more persons.
Starting in Life. For three males and two females.
Faith, Hope and Charity. For three little girls.
Dorothy and Joan. For two males and one female.
The May. A Floral Fancy. For six little girls.
The Enchanted Princess. 2 males, several females.
Honor to Whom Honor is Due. 7 males and 1 female.
The Gentle Client. Several males and one female.
Phrenology. A Discussion. For twenty males.
The Stubbletown Volunteer. 2 males and 1 female.
A Scene from "Paul Pry." For four males.
The Charms. For three males and one female.
Bee, Clock and Broom. For three little girls.
The Right way. A Colloquy. For two boys.
What the Ledger Says. For two males.
The Crimes of Dress. A Colloquy. For two boys.
The Reward of Benevolence. For four males.
The Letter. For two males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 5.

The Three Guesses. For school or parlor.
Sentiment. A "Three Persons' " Farce.
Behind the Curtain. For males and females.
The Eta Pi Society. For five boys and a teacher.
Examination Day. For several female characters.
Trading in "Traps." For several males.
The Schoolboys' Tribunal. For ten boys.
A Loose Tongue. For several males and females.
How Not to Get an Answer. For two females.
Putting on Acts. A Comedy. For two males.
The Straight Mark. For several boys.
Two Ideas of Life. A Colloquy. For ten girls.
Extract from Marino Fallero.
Ma-try-Money. An Acting Charade.
The Six Virtues. For six young ladies.
The Irishman at Home. For two males.
Fashionable Requirements. For three girls.
A Bevy of I's (Eyes). For eight or less little girls.

Dime Dialogues, No. 6.

The Way They Kept a Secret. For male and females.
The Post under Difficulties. For five males.
William Tell. For a whole school.
Woman's Rights. For seven females and two males.
All is not Gold that Glitters. For male and females.
The Generous Jew. For six males.
Shopping. For three males and one female.
The Two Counselors. For three males.
The Votaries of Folly. For a number of females.
Aunt Betsy's Beaux. For 4 females and 2 males.
The Libel Suit. For two females and one male.
Santa Claus. For a number of boys.
Christmas Fairies. For several little girls.
The Three Rings. For two males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 7.

The Two Beggars. For fourteen females.
The Earth-Child in Fairy-Land. For girls.
Twenty Years Hence. Two females, one male.
The Way to Windham. For two males.
Woman. A Poetic Passage at Words. Two boys.
The Ologies. A Colloquy. For two males.
How to Get Rid of a Bore. For several boys.
Boarding-School. For two males and two females.
Plea for the Pledge. For two males.
The Ills of Dram-Drinking. For three boys.
True Pride. A Colloquy. For two females.
The Two Lecturers. For numerous males.
Two Views of Life. A Colloquy. For two females.
The Rights of Music. For two females.
A Hopeless Case. A Query in Verse. Two girls.
The Would-be School-Teacher. For two males.
Come to Life too Soon. For three males.
Eight O'clock. For two little girls.
True Dignity. A Colloquy. For two boys.
Grief too Expensive. For two males.
Hamlet and the Ghost. For two persons.
Little Red Riding Hood. For two females.
New Application of an Old Rule. Boys and girls.
Colored Cousins. A Colloquy. For two males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 8.

The Fairy School. For a number of girls.
The Enrolling Officer. For three girls and two boys.
The Base-ball Enthusiast. For three boys.
The Girl of the Period. For three girls.
The Fowl Rebellion. For two males and one female.
Slow but Sure. For several males and two females.
Caudle's Velocipede. For one male and one female.
The Figures. For several small children.
The Trial of Peter Sloper. For seven boys.
Getting a Photograph. For males and females.
The Society for General Improvement. For girls.
A Nobleman in Disguise. Three girls and six boys.
Great Expectations. For two boys.
Playing School. For five females and four males.
Clothes for the Heathen. For 1 male and 1 female.
A Hard Case. For three boys.
Ghosts. For ten females and one male.

Dime Dialogues, No. 9.

Advertising for Help. For a number of females.
America to England. Greeting. For two boys.
The Old and the New. For 4 females and 1 male.
Choice of Trades. For twelve little boys.
The Lap-Dog. For two females.
The Victim. For four females and one male.
The Duelist. For two boys.
The True Philosophy. For females and males.
A Good Education. For two females.
The Law of Human Kindness. For two females.
Spoiled Children. For a mixed school.
Brutus and Cassius.
Coriolanus and Aufidius.
The New Scholar. For a number of girls.
The Self-made Man. For three males.
The May Queen (No. 2). For a school.
Mrs. Lackland's Economy. For 4 boys and 3 girls.
Should Women be Given the Ballot? For boys.

Dime Dialogues, No. 10.

Mrs. Mark Twain's Shoe. For 1 male and 1 female.
The Old Flag. School Festival. For three boys.
The Court of Folly. For many girls.
Great Lives. For six boys and six girls.
Scandal. For numerous males and females.
The Light of Love. For two boys.
The Flower Children. For twelve girls.
The Deaf Uncle. For three boys.
A Discussion. For 4 boys.
The Rehearsal. For a school.
The True Way. For three boys and one girl.
A Practical Life Lesson. For three girls.
The Monk and the Soldier. For two boys.
1776-1876. School Festival. For two girls.
Lord Dundreary's Visit. For 2 males and 2 females.
Witches in the Cream. For 3 girls and 3 boys.
Frenchman. Charade. Numerous characters.
The Hardscrabble Meeting. For ten males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 11.

Appearances are very Deceitful. For six boys.
The Conundrum Family. For male and female.
Curing Betsy. For three males and four females.
Jack and the Beanstalk. For five characters.
The Way to Do it and Not to Do it. For three females.
How to Become Healthy. For 1 male and 1 female.
The Only True Life. For two girls.
Classic Colloquies. For two boys.
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Fashionable Dissipation. For two little girls.
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A Debate. For four boys.
Ragged Dick's Lesson. For three boys.
School Charade, with Tableau.
A Very Questionable Story. For two boys.
A Sell. For three males.
The Real Gentleman. For two boys.

Dime Dialogues, No. 12.

Yankee Assurance. For several characters.
Boarders Wanted. For several characters.
When I was Young. For two girls.
The Most Precious Heritage. For two boys.
The Double Cure. For two males and four females.
The Flower-garden Fairies. For five little girls.
Jemima's Novel. For three males and two females.
Beware of the Widows. For three girls.
A Family not to Pattern After. For ten characters.
How to Man-age. An acting charade.
The Vacation Escapade. For four boys and teacher.
That Naughty Boy. For 3 females and 1 male.
Mad-cap. An acting charade.
All is not Gold that Glitters. Acting proverb.
Sic Transit Gloria Mundi. Acting charade.

Dime Dialogues, No. 13.

Two O'clock in the Morning. For three males.
An Indignation Meeting. For several females.
Before and Behind the Scenes. Several characters.
The Noblest Boy. A number of boys and teacher.
Blue Heaven. A Drama Piece. For girls and boys.
Not so Bad as it Seems. For several characters.
A Curbstone Moral. For two males and female.
Sense vs. Sentiment. For parlor and exhibition.
Worth, not Wealth. For four boys and a teacher.
No such Word as Fail. For several males.
The Sleeping Beauty. For a school.
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Old Nabby, the Fortune-teller. For three girls.
Boy-talk. For several little boys.
Mother is Dead. For several little girls.
A Practical Illustration. For two boys and girl.

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Mrs. Jonas Jones. For three gents and two ladies.
The Born Genius. For four gents.
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Who on Airth is He? For three girls.
The Right not to be a Pauper. For two boys.
Woman Nature Will Out. For a girls' school.
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A Woman's Blindness. For three girls.
Rum's Work. (Temperance). For four gents.
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Eyes and Nose. For one gent and one lady.
Retribution. For a number of boys.

Dime Dialogues, No. 15.

The Fairies' Escapade. Numerous characters.
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Aunt Polly's Lesson. For four ladies.
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Will it Pay? For two boys.
The Heir-at-law. For numerous males.
Don't Believe What You Hear. For three ladies.
A Safety Rule. For three ladies.
The Chief's Resolve. Extract. For two males.
Testing her Friends. For several characters.
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The Cat Without an Owner. Several characters.
Natural Selection. For three gentlemen.

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Polly Ann. For four ladies and one gentleman.
The Meeting of the Winds. For a school.
The Good They Did. For six ladies.
The Boy Who Wins. For six gentlemen.
Good-bye Day. A Colloquy. For three girls.
The Sick Well Man. For three boys.

The Dime Dialogues.

The Investigating Committee. For nine ladies.
A "Corner" in Rogues. For four boys.
The Imps of the Trunk Room. For five girls.
The Boasters. A Colloquy. For two little girls.
Kitty's Funeral. For several little girls.
Stratagem. Charade. For several characters.
Testing Her Scholars. For numerous scholars.
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The Old and the New. For gentleman and lady.

Dime Dialogues, No. 17.

LITTLE FOLKS' SPEECHES AND DIALOGUES.

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Evanescence Glory. For a bevy of boys.
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What Parts Friends. For two little girls.
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The Evil There is in it. For two young boys.
Wise and Foolish Little Girl. For two girls.
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How to do it. For two boys.
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The True Heroism. For three little boys.
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Dime Dialogues, No. 18.

Fairy Wishes. Several characters, male and female.
No Rose Without a Thorn. Two males, one female.
Too Greedy by Half. For three males.
One Good Turn Deserves Another. For six ladies.
Courting Melinda. For three boys and one lady.
The New Scholar. For several boys.
The Little Intercessor. For four ladies.
Antecedents. For three gentlemen and three ladies.
Give a Dog a Bad Name. For four gentlemen.
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The Lesson Well Worth Learning. For two males and two females.

Dime Dialogues, No. 19.

An Awful Mystery. For two females and two males.
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California Uncle. For 3 males and 3 females.
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The Wrong Man. For three males and three females.
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Couldn't Read English. For three males, one female.
A Little Vesuvius. For six little girls.
"Sold." For three boys.
An Air Castle. For five males and three females.
City Manners and Country Hearts. 3 girls and 1 boy.
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Not One There! For four male characters.
Foot-print. For numerous characters.
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A Cure for Good. For one lady and two gentlemen.
The Credulous Wise-Acre. For two males.

Dime Dialogues, No. 21.

A Successful Donation Party. For several.
Out of Debt Out of Danger. For three males and three females.
Little Red Riding Hood. For two children.

How She Made Him Propose. A duet.
The House on the Hill. For four females.
Evidence enough. For two males.
Worth and Wealth. For four females.
Waterfall. For several.
Mark Hastings' Return. For four males.
Cinderella. For several children.
Too Much for Aunt Matilda. For three females.
Wit against Wile. For three females and one male.
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The Double Stratagem. For four females.
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Dime Dialogues, No. 22.

The Dark Cupid. For 3 Gentlemen and 2 ladies.
That Ne'er-do-Well. Two males and two females.
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The King's Supper. For four girls.
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Heart Not Face. For five boys.

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Rhoda Hunt's Remedy. For three females, one male.
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The Regenerators. For five boys.
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Each Season the Best. For four boys.
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Saved by a Dream. For two males and two females.
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An Agreeable Profession. For several characters.

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